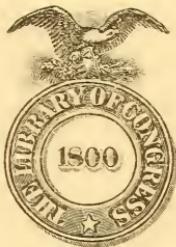


# MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS



L.A. REED



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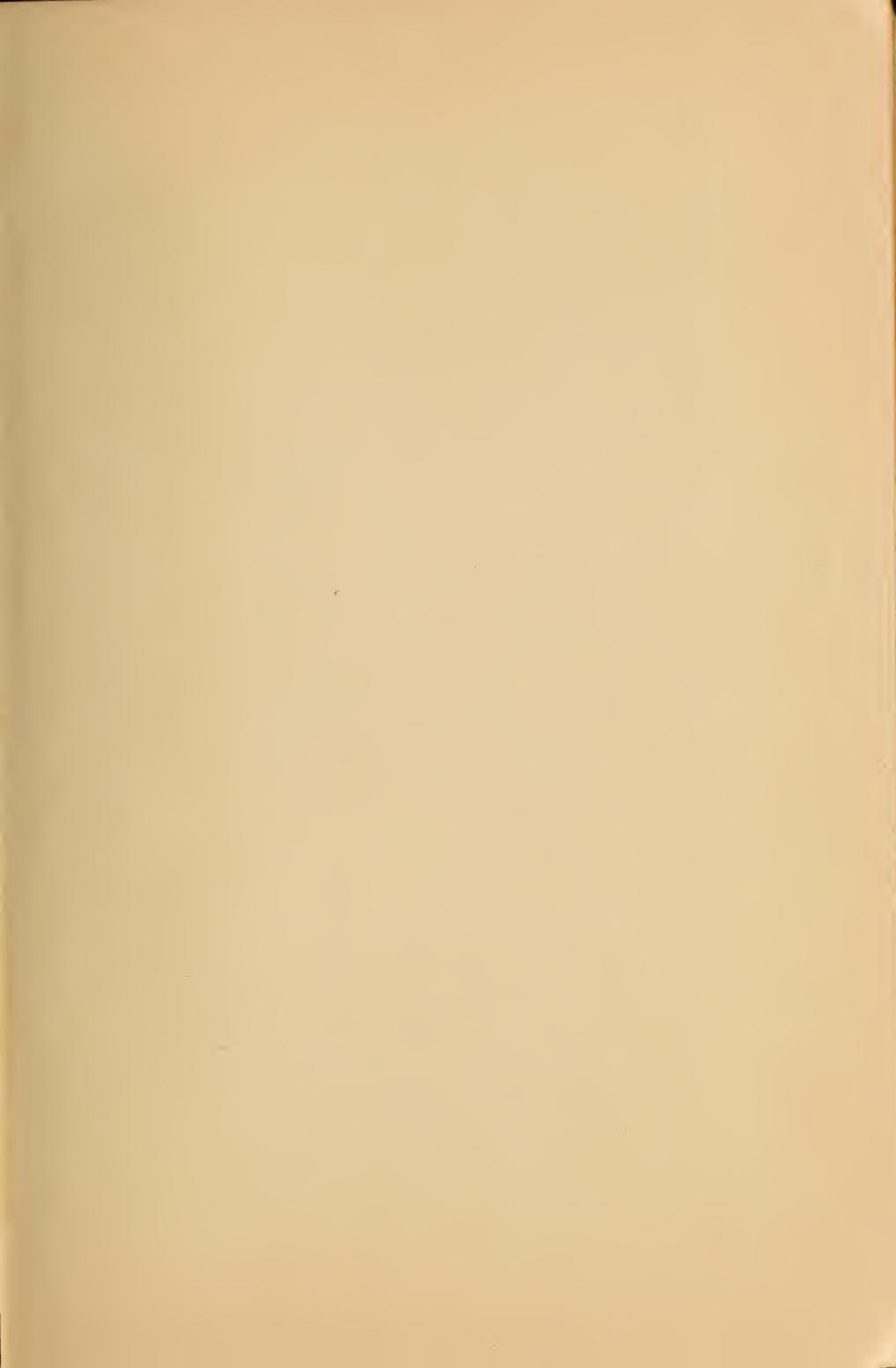
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THE BLUEBIRD

# My Garden Neighbors

*True Stories of  
Nature's Children*

By L. A. REED, B.S., M.S.

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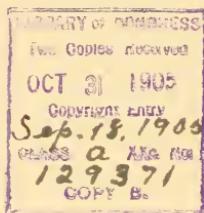
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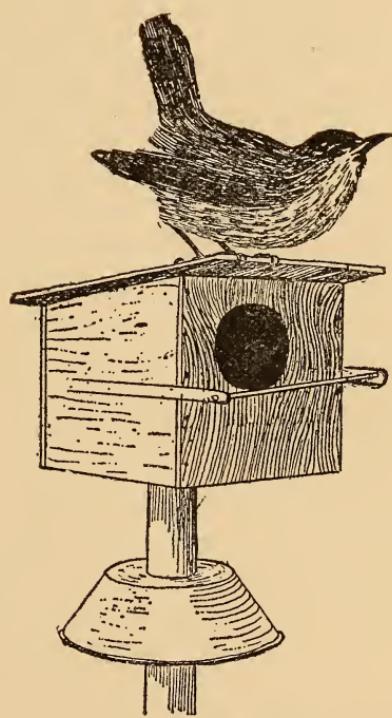


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# I

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

Once upon a time, that is to say, last summer, there stood in the man's garden a pole, and on the pole a bird-box.

Now, this bird-box had been built for blue-birds alone, and had all birds in that section respected the fact, this story would not have been written.

This box had been built upon scientific principles. It had an entrance hole just the right size for a bluebird, no larger, no smaller.

And most important of all, it had no perch in front of the entrance; it had no front porch, so to speak; for the bluebirds, so the books say, by building in old woodpecker holes, have learned,—now, note the words,—have learned to fly directly into the nest without the aid of a perch.

All this being in accordance with the books, and the books being only the unimpeachable

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

wisdom of the wise, it stands to reason that the owner of the aforesaid bird-box had no misgivings whatever, when one fine morning in early spring he saw two sparrows making a thorough investigation of that scientific box.

There was the sign, "For Rent; bluebirds only need apply," showing in that bare, unbroken front of bird-box. They sat on the roof, these two sparrows, and discussed the situation. It was a hard proposition for sparrows. For unrecorded ages no sparrow had ever rented a home for the summer unless the house had a front porch.

Here was a home just to their taste — all but the porch. But how could they ever get into it? It was very provoking; that is, to sparrows.

But the owner of the house laughed softly to himself. He had built a house that was proof against sparrows; he could afford to laugh.

"You can't make it, can you?" he said to the sparrows. "You might as well fly along. You are not welcome here. That box was made for bluebirds, and no sparrow living

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

can get into it. Go on about your business; go on, I say."

The sparrows did not mind what he said, and would have remained for all of his remarks; but the clod of dirt the man threw was more convincing than his argument, and so they left at once.

It was not long, however, before they were back again; in fact, they returned as soon as the man had disappeared. Their wits still worked with the mighty problem of how to get into that box. On the roof of the house they gathered and plotted a hundred times a day.

And then the bluebirds came!

Of course, there was trouble at once and continuously. The sparrow is not one to be imposed upon, and an imposition he considered this conduct of the bluebirds.

In a very unexplainable way to the sparrows, Mr. Bluebird flew into the box as neatly as you please, inspected the inside, and came out again. Then he talked with Mrs. Bluebird, and just as easily she flew in, looked about the place, and came out again.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Mr. Sparrow flew back and forth, and was very much excited. He saw that his rights as a sparrow were endangered. Again and again he called for Mrs. Sparrow, and at last she came.

Just at this time the bluebirds were on the roof, having an earnest and interesting conference. It took but a few notes of explanation from Mr. Sparrow, and then the fight began.

There is no knowing how the battle would have ended, had not the owner appeared and taken a hand. He threw clods at the sparrows, but managed to frighten the bluebirds about as badly as the sparrows.

Nevertheless, the sparrows were driven off. They could come back, however, about as quickly as they went; and always they were full of fight.

The bluebirds seemed to be hardly a match for the aggressive, bold, stubborn sparrows; and when the battle pressed too hard, they took refuge in flight. But on one point they had the advantage over the sparrows: they could enter the box whenever they chose.

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

The best that the sparrows could do, was to alight on the roof of the bird-house, and hop and scold, and scold and hop; and threaten the bluebirds with extermination if they dared dispute their title to this mansion.

But the bluebird, in a wink, would fly directly into the front door, without so much as a "Thank you" or "If you please." Inside he was perfectly safe from the sparrows; and when he was through with the work within, out he came, and was away again before the sparrows could utter a peep.

Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow were puzzled to know how a bird could fly into a hole like that. They wanted a place to alight on first, and then but a hop and they would be inside. This flying straight into a front door, without even so much as to stop to scrape your feet, was so out of order. For ages their race had never done it that way. It would be so much easier to have a resting-place at the front of the door.

Thus for a week or two the struggle went on, the sparrows seeking to win by sheer force and fight, the bluebirds getting their

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

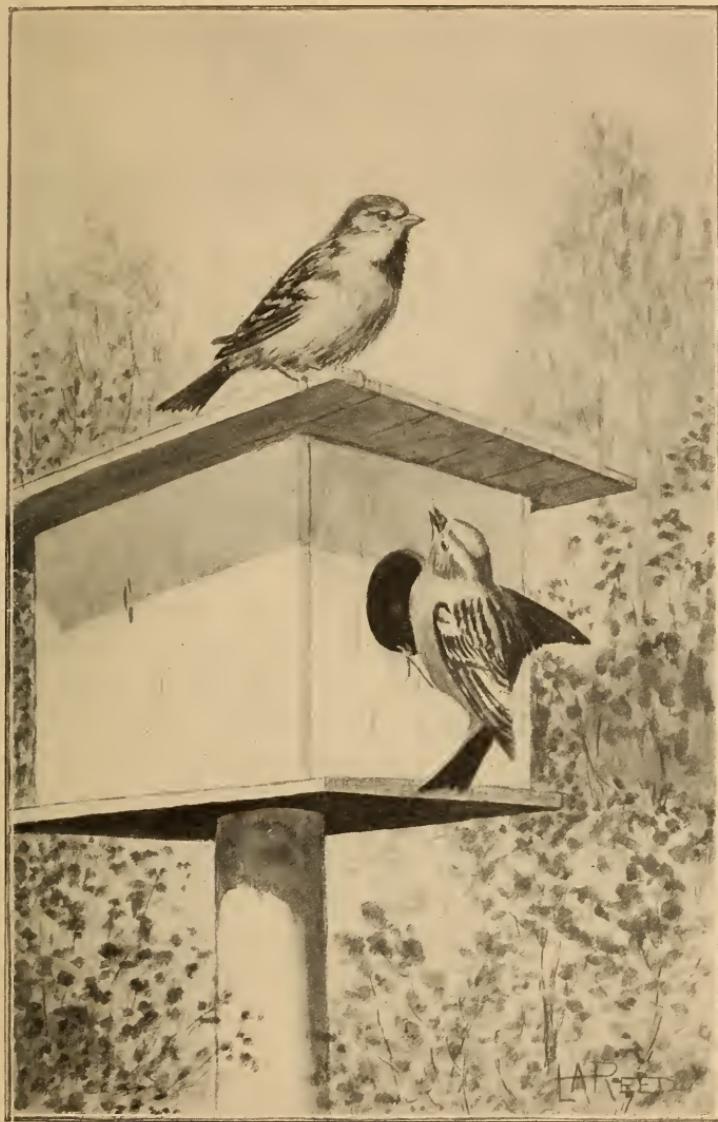
way always in spite of the sparrows, because of a mother-wit that showed them how.

It was a battle between brains and brawn, in which brains was represented by the bluebirds, and brawn by the sparrows. It became painfully manifest that the bluebirds had the best of it.

But the owner of the garden, watching the constant battle and the unabating pugnacity of the sparrows, grew worried and nervous over the possible outcome. He knew that the bluebirds love peace; and he feared that they would become tired of the battle, and leave, in order to escape the worry of their enemies.

And so he borrowed a gun. A little twenty-two caliber weapon it was, guaranteed to kill birds and not worry the neighbors.

The sparrows, all unsuspecting at first, let him fire a few broadsides at them, in which none of them were hurt. After that, they moved into the next block whenever he appeared with that shooting-machine in his hand. They promptly came back, however, when the gun was put away. Dull as they might be considered by their human neigh-





## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

bors, they had learned in a few minutes the advantage of keeping out of the reach of the weapon that vomited fire.

And the gun frightened the bluebirds, as well. By some means, in fact, the sparrows had told all the birds in the neighborhood that a bird massacre was impending. Robins, sparrows, blackbirds, bluebirds, and every other feathered denizen of the community, became excited, flew about nervously, talking incessantly, whenever that old gun banged forth its fiery warning.

It certainly would not do. The bluebirds were more likely to leave than the sparrows. The gun was leaned in a corner, to stay there until it went back to its owner.

And the bluebirds kept on with their building, and the sparrows kept on with their fight.

It was beginning to get late for nest building. It was time for the sparrows to be at housekeeping; they realized that. Even if there were no bluebirds, they could not get into the house. They were simply forced by circumstances to find another place.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Two children, living next door, had been watching the contest between the birds. To them it was an interesting fight. They wished a few birds would come over their way, and start a miniature prize-fight, too. So they put a box with a hole in it on the limb of an apple tree.

The day they did it, an energetic, wide-awake wren saw it, inspected it, and took possession. He began at once to stuff it full of sticks, for he needed them for his housekeeping. He uses them for his furniture, so to speak. He certainly did not know how much he needed, for he kept at work until he could barely stuff any more inside.

Then he perched outside and sang his best. Wrens must have been scarce that season, for sing as he would, there was no answering note. He was just one, lonely wren.

And now the sparrows appeared. They liked the house. It suited them almost as well as the house on the pole which the blue-birds had taken. And here there was so much fine furniture brought, all clean and handy! Yes, the house suited them. They wanted

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

it, and as sparrows always expect to get what they want, they set about to take possession. But the wren just as surely expected them not to get possession, and so there was another fight.

It was a real fight; there was no question about it. Though the wren was but one, and the sparrows two, he made up by motion and spunk and wit what otherwise he lacked.

Thus the boys had just what they had hoped for — a real bird battle on their side of the fence.

Sometimes the sparrows got tired of fighting the wren, and tried a few sorties with the bluebirds. But as they accomplished nothing with these, they soon came back to the wren.

Whenever they gave him a chance, Mr. Wren kept on with his lawful task of hunting a wife. The way a wren has of doing this, is to sit by his ready-made nest, and almost sing his head off; at least, he looks as if he would. He can utter more warbles to the minute, and send them out with more pressure to the square inch, than any other bird that wears feathers.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Mr. Wren lived up to the reputation of his family. He sang for a wife and fought sparrows, and fought sparrows and sang for a wife. But no wife came.

At last he seemed to realize that he was to be a bachelor. When the fact dawned upon him, he seemed at once to reconcile himself to his fate. He immediately gave way to the sparrows.

Without even so much as a "Thank you," they took possession of the box in the apple tree.

The fight was over. There was peace between the sparrows and the bluebirds, for each had a home of his own. And there was peace between the sparrows and the wren, for the wren had withdrawn all opposition, and had given them the products of his toil.

There was peace throughout the garden and among the blossoming fruit trees. The apple trees were white with bloom, and every branch swung its fragrant censer to the breeze. The peach trees were pink with a fulness of blossoms, and the white plum trees saturated the air with their perfume.



HAREED.



## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

Housekeeping with the birds went on in peace. The wren lived alone in the orchard. He was an old bachelor indeed, but the fact did not seem to wear on his spirits; no, not for a minute. He sang until every feather on his little body quivered with the ecstasy.

When the sparrows' eggs hatched, he did his part in supplying the young sparrows with plenty of food. Of course, they were not his children; and he did not have to support other birds' children; certainly not. But there was nothing else for him to do, except to eat and to sing, and he could not eat and sing all of the time—his stomach and his vocal organs had their limits. Therefore, for exercise and for the sheer delight of being useful and obliging, he continued his missionary labor of filling those gaping mouths with food.

The old sparrows seemed at first a little surprised at the work of the wren, and grew a trifle excited, and expostulated for a spell. But they soon saw the advantage of it, and the wren was given full liberty to continue his good work.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

He did not bring the same kind of food the sparrows did, but young birds never refuse anything offered them. It is certain the small, green worms the wren fed them did them no harm; for they thrived and grew, and none of them ever had a chance to get very hungry.

The bluebirds seemed always happy. The owner of the garden sometimes stopped to watch them. Mr. Bluebird was often busy, bringing food for his wife, and saying nice things in a tone of voice that clearly indicated his love.

The owner of the garden found some grub-worms while spading his garden for the spring crop of vegetables. He threw them out on the surface of the ground, and it was surprising how quickly they were seized by Mr. Bluebird and carried away to the house on the pole.

Now, here was an idea. The wren could help the sparrows, but the owner of the garden would help the bluebirds. He knew where among a tangle of roots there were dozens of grubs, all fat and white.

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

He dug up four fine big fellows and put them in a strawberry box and set them in the open. They were not there two minutes before Mr. Bluebird spied them. How excited he became! He was a trifle afraid, for the owner of the garden stood close by.

He flew at once to the house on the pole, and an exciting conversation ensued. He evidently told Mrs. Bluebird about the grubs. She became excited, too. Mr. Bluebird flew to the apple tree; Mrs. Bluebird lighted on a peach tree hard by.

"O, where are they?" she seemed to say. "Wait, wait; I'll show you," said Mr. Bluebird, as he lighted on another branch of the apple tree and swung lower. He looked sharply at the man and then even more sharply at the grubs. One of the worms was trying to get away. There was no resisting the temptation. Down he swooped and lighted on the edge of the strawberry box.

First he took a good look all about him, then he dived into the box and held up a big fat worm in his bill, and finally flew away over the fence to an undisturbed feast. In a

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

moment Mrs. Bluebird followed his example. She, too, lighted on the edge of the box, took a good survey of the situation, seized another of the grubs, and flew to the foot of the apple tree.

As soon as she had finished the first, she came back for the second, and while she was busy with that, Mr. Bluebird returned and took the fourth and last. And so the four grubs were disposed of almost in less time than one can relate it. They had divided them between them, just two apiece.

The owner of the garden stood and wondered how it had all been brought about. How had Mr. Bluebird informed his wife of the waiting grubs? She had certainly understood, and had come at once without the need of a second invitation.

The man did not understand how Mr. Bluebird could invite his wife to come all the way across the garden; but plainly he had given her the invitation, and she had promptly accepted it. They had then divided the feast equally between them.

The bluebirds were an unending pleasure

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

to the man, and it was a sorry day when the young birds were grown, and, with their parents, left the garden. And they did not once come back.

There were still the sparrows, and when the young were grown, the wren took his departure.

More than once the owner of the garden had congratulated himself upon the genius that had pointed out the secret of keeping the sparrows out of the boxes of the bluebirds.

“Put no porch before the door;” that was all there was to it. “The sparrow being no aeronaut,” said the genius, “finds difficulty in entering a hole unless there is a perch beside it, where, as it were, he can have his feet on the ground. The bluebird, on the contrary, is so used to building in woodpecker holes, none of which are blessed with piazzas or front-door steps, that he has no trouble in flying directly into a nest hole. So, by making the bluebird houses without perches, the sparrows may be kept away.”

How thankful the owner was for this safe device of the genius! It was this alone that

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

had given the bluebirds advantage over the sparrows, and been the means of the sparrows' defeat. Because of this simple and effective idea, the garden all these weeks had been blessed with the presence of the noble bluebirds. Hereafter, he would always have bluebirds in his garden, and the sparrows would be pushed back into a corner.

The bluebirds had learned this trick of flying directly into a box by having nested in woodpecker holes—so said the genius. But what the bluebirds had learned, possibly other birds may come to learn, of course, excepting sparrows.

But it is evident that the example of the bluebirds, kept constantly before the sparrows all these weeks, had certainly not been lost upon them. How to get into that box on the pole, had been the puzzling question that had first confronted them. The fact that the bluebirds knew how to do it and that they could not do it, is what settled who should have the box for a nest.

But the sparrows had seen the bluebirds fly straight into that box a hundred times or

## A NEIGHBORHOOD QUARREL

more, and they had seen how it was done; the next thing was to try the same thing in their own way the first chance that offered.

This chance to try the new trick came to the sparrows as soon as the bluebird family moved out. No one saw their first blundering attempts, but one day the lady of the garden said,—

“There are some birds building a nest in the bluebird box.”

The owner investigated, and an English sparrow flew out of the box. And so the lady and the owner hid away to see how in the world those sparrows managed to get into that box.

The owner was indeed a surprised man when he saw one of his despised sparrows fly to the box entrance, catch on the edge of the box, stand up so straight against the side of the box that he almost fell over backwards, then tuck his head inside the hole, and lo! he had disappeared within.

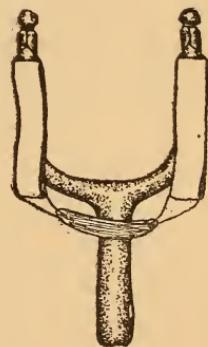
The owner was paralyzed with amazement. The genius had been circumvented. The bluebirds had been outwitted. A sparrow,

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

after his own blundering fashion, had mastered the secret.

The owner of the garden does not believe all the emphatic statements he finds in bird-books any more. He says that the books, as well as clothing, soon get out of date. You see how it is — the birds learn so fast.

# MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG





## II

### MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG

He came into the world one day in late summer. He did not seem much different from any other English sparrow in the neighborhood. He was simply the same little bunch of brown feathers and business that they all are.

But from among his fellows he soon came to be known by the fact that he had chosen for a roost a sheltered spot beneath the roof of the back porch.

At first he always flew out when any one came near, and as his chosen resting-place was near the pump, he was often disturbed. As the days went by, and no one seemed to pay any attention to him, he sometimes stayed when any of the folks came to the well for water.

After a time he became more bold, and would even take his place at roosting time, although some of the women were chatting on the back steps but a few feet away.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

There was some very cold weather that winter, and one day in February the thermometer went down to twenty-seven below zero. It would seem that all the birds out of doors would freeze to death.

But Mr. Dick of the back porch did not intend to freeze, not at least when there was so much warmth inside the house.

That evening he began to realize that the weather was a good deal colder than usual, and, when it got worse than he cared to endure, he left his perch under the porch and knocked on the window; anyway his bill did some good tapping. Whether he was knocking for entrance or only trying to fly into a place that his instincts taught him to be warmer than where he was, I can not say. I have known more than one bird to be puzzled by the mysteries of glass.

But the lady within heard the noise, and being a very kind and hospitable lady, she let down the window, and Mr. Dick flew in.

He lighted on the curtain pole above the window, and looked down on his lady host in a very serious and interested way.

## MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG

She gently closed the window and went back to her place by the table. Woman and bird watched each other for a time, and then Mr. Dick concluded it was all right, and settled down for his night's rest.

In the morning he was impatient to be away, and the lady let him out, and gave him a fine breakfast on the snow just outside.

The weather kept cold. There was nothing anywhere for a bird to eat, and no comfortable place to sleep, and that night again Mr. Dick came back and knocked once more on the window. Again the lady let him in, and he slept safely and comfortably on the curtain pole above the window.

But the next day the weather grew warmer, and he seemed to think his old place under the porch was good enough, so he went back to roost on the ledge under the shelter of the roof.

Sometimes he seemed afraid to stay there in the evening until it had grown somewhat dark, so that the foolish little fellow thought no one would notice him. Then he would fly under when no one was looking, or at any

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

rate he thought they were not, and there he would remain.

More than once, just at bedtime, the man went out and lighted a match, to find Mr. Dick perched up in his corner, all safe and comfortable.

When the spring came, Mr. Dick found a mate, and they built a nest in the rotten stub of a silver maple, where a woodpecker had made his hole the previous winter.

When Mrs. Sparrow settled down to the work of brooding, Mr. Sparrow was kept busy getting food for her and the babies. But sometimes he had a little leisure, and perched on the highest stub of the old maple, where he tried his best to warble the thankfulness he felt. Sometimes it seemed as if he really would manage a trill or two, and possibly a few rounds of melody, but they were mere suggestions, that failed to develop into reality. He couldn't sing, that was very evident; but, like some other than birds, he continued to persist in making the attempt. Otherwise than showing how he felt, it was certainly a dead failure.

## MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG

In Morgan County, I am told, there is a royalty of two cents paid for the head of an English sparrow. The boys, consequently, are growing quite expert with their deadly sling-shots in their ambitious effort to earn spending money.

In process of time one of these ambitious youngsters passed by the old silver maple, where Mr. Sparrow was trying to sing his head off.

Whiff! went the sling-shot, and Mr. Sparrow flew away with one of his legs missing. It had been shot off just above the joint by the keen cutting shot of the boy's weapon.

Crutches are an unknown quantity among sparrows, and hopping on one leg is neither graceful nor easy. Mr. Sparrow came back to his tree after a time, but he caught a good scolding from Mrs. Sparrow when he did.

She did not seem to know what was the matter with him, or seemed to think he was merely playing lazy. She told him to be off on a hunt for food. He argued back, and tried to explain that he was hurt and couldn't work any more that day.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Then Mrs. Sparrow got angry and flew at him to give him a flouncing. Lame as he was, he could fly as well as ever, and he kept out of her way.

Then she coaxed him, and pleaded with him, and reminded him of the babies.

He had settled on the tin roof of the back porch. He could not stand very easily on one leg, so he squatted down on his breast and closed his eyes as if he felt pretty miserable. I have no doubt he did feel so, having one of his legs chopped off.

But Mrs. Sparrow did not intend to let him sleep or to give him very much peace. Every now and then she landed near him, sometimes talking to him in a quiet, earnest way, sometimes scolding him pretty thoroughly, always urging him to help about getting food.

And when Mrs. Sparrow was not busy coaxing or entreating or scolding her lord, she was busy getting food for the young sparrows in the nest.

Sometimes Mr. Sparrow would rouse up a little, tumble or hop about on one leg, using





## MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG

his wings very vigorously the while. Then he would settle down again, close his eyes, and with bill open, seemingly pant for life.

Mrs. Sparrow either could not understand what ailed him, or else thought he was a mere good-for-nothing. Anyway, she made up her mind to get a divorce from him then and there, and marry somebody that would work, instead of lie around on the roof all day.

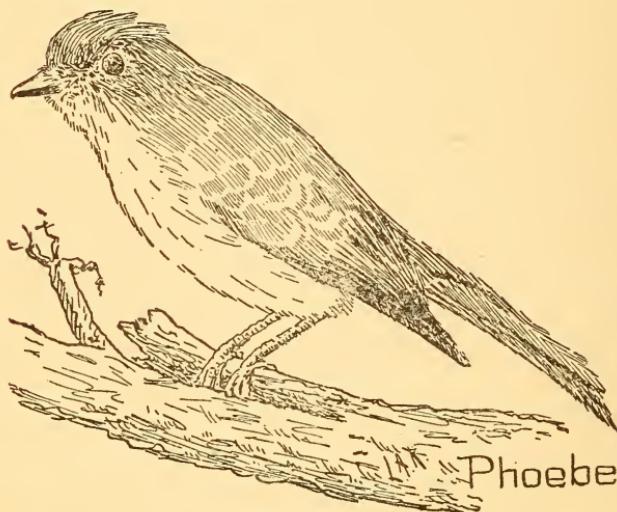
Shortly after coming to this conclusion, she appeared with a new husband. He was a fat, smart, rather youngish-looking creature. He followed Mrs. Sparrow until he caught sight of Mr. Sparrow-with-the-one-leg, and then he stopped and shouted out a challenge.

Mr. One-leg answered him back. At this, Mr. New Sparrow assumed a fighting attitude and challenged again and called names. Mr. One-leg answered him back, challenge for challenge, name for name. But Mr. One-leg wouldn't leave his rest on the roof. Then Mr. New Sparrow flew a trifle nearer the nest and challenged again. Mr. One-leg brightened up a trifle and challenged louder than his enemy.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Then Mr. New Sparrow attempted to fly to the twig just in front of the stub that held the nest. That was the signal for a fight.

Mr. One-leg went at Mr. New Sparrow like a shot from a gun. Mr. New Sparrow



was off with a vengeance, and kept well out of the way of Mr. One-leg, who soon came back and settled in a crotch of the maple.

The next day was a repetition of what the previous day had been. Mrs. Sparrow found several mates, and brought them to the maple,

## MR. DICKEY ONE-LEG

only to have them all driven away again by the furious attacks of Mr. One-leg.

And he not only attacked the birds she brought, but he gave her a good scolding each time into the bargain. Sometimes he remonstrated, sometimes he waxed wrathy. But she could scold, too, and they had it back and forth quite considerably.

She objected to having to do all the work herself, and he, of course, couldn't help, and wouldn't allow any other bird to do what plainly it was his duty to do.

She called him a miserable, lazy good-for-nothing. He tried to explain that he wasn't lazy, but sick, and ought to be in the hospital instead of having to fight for his rights and be abused by her.

But after a day or two more he grew much better, seemed to get his spirits again, and managed to use his one leg with a good deal of dexterity. Once in a while he would wobble a little and have to hop some to keep his balance.

As soon as he was well enough to gather food, he found little trouble in making up

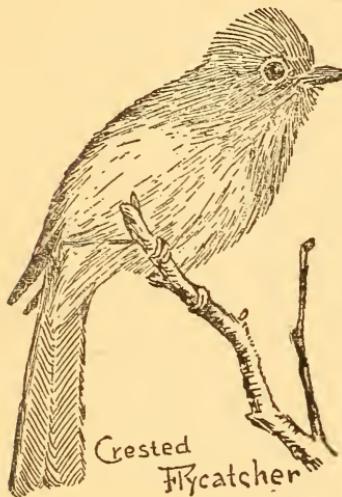
## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

with his wife, and he was soon as useful and as happy a bird as he ever had been. His mate followed him around as lovingly and dutifully as in the former days. And the young birds grew and flourished under their

care, and soon went out into the world to brave their own dangers, such, for example, as boys and sling-shots.

It seems to be true with birds, as well as with people, that if one only has the spirit and courage to push ahead, they can succeed in spite of great and many obstacles.

A handicap does not necessarily prevent or hinder success. So it has proved with Mr. Dickey One-leg.



## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING





### III

#### TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

The first indications of the coming of the bluebirds were a few faint rumors. Just a note now and then from far away, a vague suggestion of song, a wandering voice that presaged the arrival of the little creatures in blue.

Then came on a cold snap and a light flurry of snow. There was not a sound of the murmuring song again for over a week.

But soon the snow melted, the weather gradually got warmer, and one sunshiny day there was the bluebird, sitting on one of the posts of the grape trellis. His appearance was almost as sudden and unannounced as a rain would be that comes without gathering of clouds. It seemed much as if he had dropped from the sky and brought some of its blue with him.

He sat on the post, singing his early song. Some one has said that he should be called the national bird, because he wears the national

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

colors,— red, white, and blue. The red is a little dull, like the red in an old flag, but this only strengthens the claim that is made for his national characteristics.

And surely he has the color of the red earth on his breast, and the color of the blue heavens on his back, and between the two colors he wears the white of the clouds that hover between these two. In him the heavenly and the earthly meet and are friends, not alone in the colors he wears, but in the faultless nature of the bird himself. And so both color and character in him betoken that between heaven and earth peace has been proclaimed, good-will toward men.

Many careful observers all agree that bluebirds never utter a harsh, unpleasant note. Even when they are driven to defend their rights, they do not scold and seem to get into a fury, as do the wrens and the sparrows. There is a gentleness about them always that is indescribable, as well as being something of an example to humanity itself.

The arrival of the bluebirds is a certain token of the spring. Soon the plow will be

## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

turning furrows in the fields; and in a little time the fruit trees will be a perfect show of blossoms, and the air be filled with perfume.

The first time you see him will probably be in March or the first of April. He has come from the southland and the far-away islands of the Indies.

John Burroughs, with his fine imagination, thinks he hears the bluebird crying in the early spring, "Bermuda! Bermuda! Bermuda!" and we know that the mild climate of spring, like that of Bermuda, is about to break the hard, long reign of Winter.

First came Mr. Bluebird, like a hardy pioneer, a week or two in advance of Mrs. Bluebird. By the time she arrived, the ground was being turned in the garden as fast as a spade and a strong back could do it.

Mr. Bluebird was very devoted to his mate. There never was a happier or more faithful husband than he. He followed her wherever she went, her constant attendant. He sang to her, he sang for her; he always was demonstrative, sometimes almost hilarious, in his joy.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

She seemed more businesslike, acting as if she had very serious work to do. He might live on love if he chose, but she had work to do, and was certainly going about it. He might look at the sky and sing; she must look around for a house, and build her nest.

And soon one fine morning a rival appeared. Mr. Bluebird left his wife at once, and went after the intruder in a hurry. He chased him from place to place, reproving, rebuking the while, and always driving him farther away. Then feeling that he had done the work well and taught his enemy a good lesson, he came back and sang the triumphs of the moment and the transports of his joy.

For the first few days of their honeymoon, his affectionate attentions to his wife were constant and very marked. He seemed to think that he must even feed her, and one might easily imagine that his song, as well as his attentions, became somewhat tiresome to her at length. Anyway, she turned his energies to the matter of finding a nesting-place.

He soon adjusted himself to the new proposition, and led the way by examining the dove-house in the peak of the barn. He went

## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

in through one of the many entrances, came out, and talked to his wife about it. She seemed to get enough interested in the matter to enter and look the place over. Coming out, they had another council. She seemed to find some objections, he seemed to hesitate, and wanted a minute in which to think it over. Then he went inside again, and soon came out. They talked the matter over again. She had to enter and make another examination.

She seemed to yield rather reluctantly. They began as if to build the nest. She gathered a few grasses. Then she flew away, as much as to say, "I don't like it at all." He coaxed, sang, and coaxed some more, but she was determined. Finally he let her have her way, and they hunted as before.

A new place attracted his attentions. Between the roof of the kitchen and the sloping eaves of the upright part of the house was a rain-trough. Mr. Bluebird peered in here, and the place looked very promising to him. He called to Mrs. Bluebird. She had been sunning herself on the roof of the shed, but she came forthwith.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

He showed her the place under the eaves; but when he came out this time, two English sparrows came out close behind him. They had blood in their eyes. They were intensely enraged at the intrusion of Mr. Bluebird. They went at him in a way that started the feathers. Mrs. Bluebird tried to explain, but they answered by tearing her feathers.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Bluebird sought to stay the wrath of the fighters; they tried to explain, to apologize, but there was no chance for anything of the sort. Several more sparrows appeared around the corner, and they promptly joined the fray. The bluebirds realized now, if they had not before, that it was time for them to leave, and leave they did, in precipitate, headlong flight.

They settled down on a far-away fence to dress wounds and rearrange toilets. It was a hard world,—a hard world for bluebirds. But half an hour afterward Mr. Bluebird was lifting his wings and quavering, “Cheerily, cheerily.” And when his wife made a remark or two, he showed his appreciation and concord by replying, “Tru-al-ly, tru-al-ly.”

## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

It seems that Mr. Bluebird was a trifle discouraged by this time in the matter of hunting house sites, and declined in honor of his wife. A little later he was singing in glee from the peak of the shed. She had found a knot hole in the side of the shed; it led in between the sheathing and gave them a snug place for a home; but they would never be able to live there — the shed was the home of a colony of rats. The birds gave up this place inside of three days.

By this time the man was interested. The first spare time he had, he built a box, put it on a pole, fastened a collar of tin about the pole to keep down prowling cats, and set the thing in the garden, among the blackberry vines.

The very next day Mr. Bluebird was singing out the raptures of his heart, while his wife was busy, going back and forth, arranging her nest. He never sat still very long at a time. He was Mrs. Bluebird's constant attendant. Always a little distance ahead of her, he led the way while she gathered the material. He carried not so much as a straw

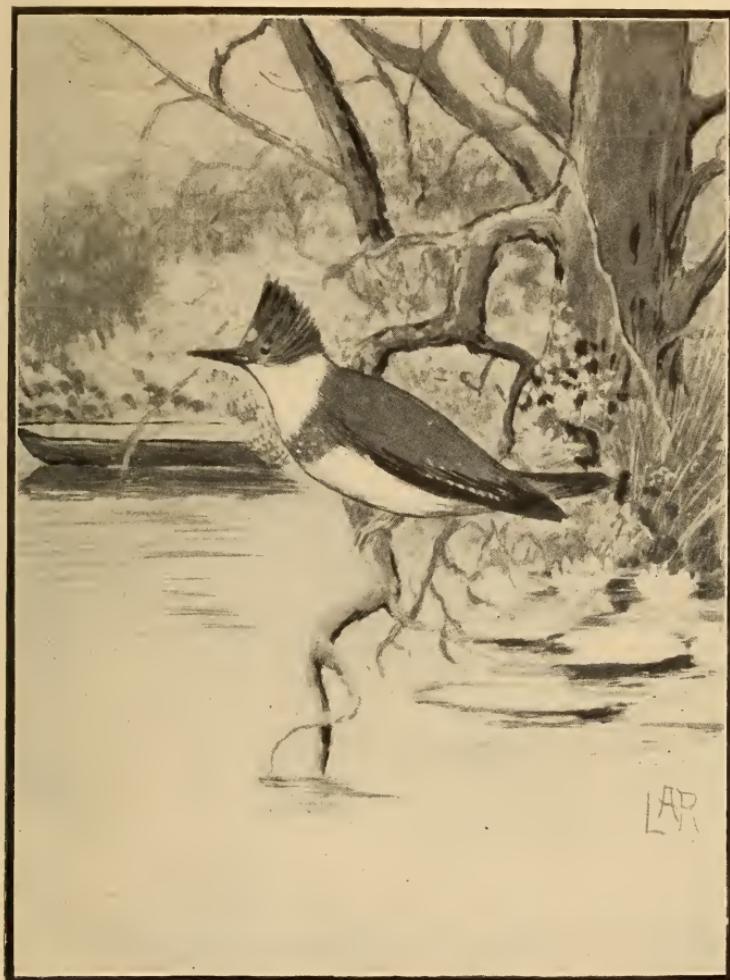
## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

for her. Like the Indian's squaw, she did all the work. He sang and acted as her guard and policeman.

She would enter the box and arrange her material in the nest. Then she would withdraw, and wait for him to go in and inspect her work. He would soon come out and exclaim most encouragingly, "Excellent, excellent! Tru-al-ly, tru-al-ly!"

Thus encouraged, she would start for new material, he flying out in advance of her to see that no harm came to her, and to brave all the dangers himself. In due time they had their nest of soft grass all completed, and soon four eggs appeared.

About this time Mr. Bluebird seemed to put on a little extra by way of singing. He seemed to be wonderfully proud of the little blue mate and her eggs, and guarded them most faithfully and tenderly. He was forever on the watch for grasshoppers in the grass, crickets, and even caterpillars, with some grubs, if the gardener's spade happened to turn them out; and, further, he was glad to get a little dessert for himself and wife in



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## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

the form of a few berries from the neighboring thickets.

He certainly kept her well supplied; nevertheless, she left the nest at intervals for a short time, possibly for a rest or a change of air, or to get some food more directly to her liking. They seemed to have no trouble from their enemies.

Mr. Burroughs tells us that one of their worst foes is the snake. He knew of a boy who was in the habit of putting his hand down into the nest and taking out the mother whenever he came that way. One day he put his hand in, and feeling something peculiar, withdrew it hastily, when out popped the head and neck of an enormous black snake. The boy took to his heels and the snake gave chase, pressing close upon him until a plowman near by came to the rescue with his ox-whip.

Neither the squirrels nor the cats could reach the nest, because of that inverted collar of tin about two-thirds of the way up the pole. More than once the man saw the cat attempt it, but it was a vain performance.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The days of brooding went on, and in due course of time there were four young blue-birds in the nest to be fed and cared for. Mr. Bluebird did not have so much time now in which to sing and take sun-baths. Those little mouths were ever open, clamoring for food.

The man more than once helped to find grubs for the old birds, and they certainly appreciated it, for it was a large task to keep the little birds supplied with all the food they needed and called for. From the time they hatch they have but about two weeks in which to get their growth and leave the old home. It is a short time for even birds to grow from babies to grown-up children, and everything about them that has to do with making bone, muscles, feathers, and the rest must work overtime and at a heavy pressure.

It is no wonder the little creatures are forever clamoring for something to eat, and it is nothing strange that the old birds have to get hundreds and hundreds of insects, worms, berries, and other equally appetizing things, in order to satisfy the little bird manufacturers.

## TROUBLES IN HOUSEKEEPING

And when the young are able to fly, the old birds coax them to leave the nest if they seem at all disposed to remain. They fly near the young birds, holding out to them something to eat, and the little fellows have to follow after or else go hungry. Thus they are taught to leave the nest and learn to fly.

No bird is any more interesting to study and get acquainted with than is the bluebird. If you have not as yet learned to know and love him, you should set about doing so at once. In the chapter on Invitations to the Birds, you will find instructions how to do this.

Concerning the sweet disposition of the bluebird, John Burroughs writes as follows: "He warbles and lifts his wings beseechingly, but shows no anger or disposition to scold and complain like most birds. Indeed, this bird seems incapable of uttering a harsh note, or of doing a spiteful, ill-tempered thing."

And another writer and authority on birds says: "He is my favorite bird; and while I am writing of him, a pet one, but three

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

months old, is sitting on my paper, seeming to wonder what I am doing, and why I do not play with him. He nips my pencil, but I pay no attention to him; then he tries to crawl up my sleeve, and still I pay no attention to him; so, disgusted, he flies off to search for ants or other small insects.

“After a time I raise my hand and call; back he comes like a flash, and hovering more like a large moth than a bird, he perches on my fingers, singing at the same time a soft little song that is his method of speech. Having a bird that is so thoroughly companionable, makes me regard all bluebirds with the greatest possible affection.”

To see him lift his dainty wings and say, “Tru-al-ly, tru-al-ly,” is certainly enough to captivate anybody. His gentleness makes him great.

# FIRST NEIGHBORS





## IV

### FIRST NEIGHBORS

The man's health had failed, and the doctors had advised him to live more out of doors. That is how he came to have a garden. He found a place that a friend of his was willing to sell at a fair price, and he was soon at work with the soil.

The buds were just beginning to swell on the silver-leaf maples when he began. He spaded in the garden every morning, working as long each day as his strength would permit. In a week or two he could work as long and as hard as he pleased.

When the ground was all spaded, hoed, and raked smooth, he planted it to potatoes, corn, peas, beans, and other good things that fairly made his mouth water to think about.

One day, not long after the man had begun his work in the garden, he saw a man and a boy out by the curbing, throwing broken bricks at a bird's nest. Just as he caught sight

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

of them, a brick hit the nest, and the young birds fairly screeched with pain or fright. It was the nest of an oriole, and it hung in plain sight from the boulevard.

“What are you throwing at?” asked the man.

“I’m throwing at that wild canary-bird’s nest,” answered the offender.

“Well, that’s pretty business for an overgrown boy like you,” replied the man. “You had better be at more likely work, I am thinking.”

The man with the broken brick made no remark by way of answer to this, so there was silence for a minute.

“Possibly you did not know it,” continued the man, “but we have a law in Illinois that protects song-birds and their nests. And law or no law, I never want to see you throwing bricks at birds again.”

“I meant no harm,” said the brick-thrower.

“You did mean harm to the birds, and there is no denying it; but you are doing more harm than you can ever repair. The birds are of the most useful creatures we have, and

## FIRST NEIGHBORS

the cats and the squirrels and the hawks get away with enough of them without any help from thoughtless men. I have known of boys who robbed birds' nests, but I never heard of a man doing it in this fashion before. Leave the bricks to the bricklayer, and the young birds to their parents, and the world will be the better for it. If you can't do any good, at least don't do any harm."

Well, the man never saw the brick-thrower doing any more mischief after that. It was a strange thing for a full-grown man to do, and he deserved a rebuke.

That night the man found one of the young orioles in the grass. The brick-thrower had called it a wild canary, but that showed how little he knew about birds. It was a young Baltimore oriole.

But O, such a cry-baby. It cried almost incessantly, and it was because of the crying that the man discovered it, all hidden in the grass.

He took it into the house and gave it a place of comfort, while he looked in a book to see what food little orioles like to eat.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The book said that wild mulberries are the oriole's favorite food, and as there was a large tree in the garden full of mulberries, it didn't take the man very long to get as many as the little fellow would eat.

The young oriole stopped crying long enough to eat some of the berries and then promptly went to crying again. The book said that the little orioles are the cry-babies of the bird world. This little oriole was certainly keeping up the reputation of his family. He pleaded incessantly.

The man put him in the front room, and fixed the blinds so that he could not get out, yet so that the parents could reach him. They brought him food and poked it through the spaces in the blinds.

Several times during the night the man heard the little cry-baby, and in the morning found him quite lively. He evidently had had breakfast already, for he refused to eat what the man brought to him.

All through the day he cried considerably; but that night, for some reason, he became entirely quiet. When the man listened the

## FIRST NEIGHBORS

next morning, he heard no sound from the little cry-baby. The silence seemed strange.

Going to the room, he found the poor creature stiff in death. Then he remembered about the brick-thrower and the piece of brick that struck the nest; he recalled, as well, the shrill cry that had come from the little birds.

Doubtless the little bird had been injured, and this was why he had cried so much. Perhaps he had been hurt internally; there seemed no other way to account for his death.

The man felt pretty bad about it. He took the little dead thing out into the garden, made a grave, and buried it there.

It was not very long after that when he found a young blue jay. He would not have known that the jay was anywhere about but for the foolishness of the old birds.

You know that fathers and mothers, especially young fathers and mothers, often think that their babies are just a trifle different from any other babies in all the world. Blue jays seem to feel about the same with reference to their babies.

The man was going down the garden walk

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

when one of the old jays shot straight at his face. He saw the old jay coming straight at him, like an Indian on the war-path, and dodged to avoid the onslaught. This seemed partly to frighten the jay; for he flew to an adjacent limb and hammered at that, while he screeched out his wrath.

The man had seen jays act like that before, and knew what it meant. He began at once to look all about for the young jay which he knew was the cause of this anxiety of the old birds. As soon as he began his search, the trouble broke out anew. The old jays darted at him with a vengeance, and flew here and there, and screeched and screeched as only jays can. It kept the man busy to protect his eyes.

And then soon at his feet there was a flutter and a screech — it was the young jay.

If you have never seen one of them just out of the nest, you have missed a comical sight. Its feathers were not all grown, and it looked as if its clothes were a decided misfit.

If the young jay had seen the funny side of things, it might have made quite a suc-

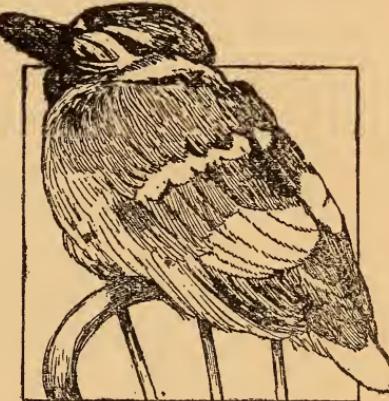
## FIRST NEIGHBORS

cess as a clown, but it took things altogether too seriously for that.

The man carried the young jay into the house, and as it was supper time, let it sit on a chair opposite, while he ate his supper. It made such a comical sight that the man laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks.

The jay, however, did not seem to enjoy the show a particle. It looked as if it was packed full of the sulks. It sat and watched the man, the very picture of slumbering wrath. But the young bird was such a caricature on a bird that the man laughed and laughed until the bird refused to be a show any longer.

It uttered a screech, and flew against the window. This seemed to sober it somewhat, by knocking a little sense in and some of its wrath out.



## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

It fluttered so at the window that the man took it in his hand, but it screeched and struggled so hard it seemed best to let it go. The man was pretty certain he could find it again in the morning. In this he was badly mistaken.

He hunted several times during the next day for the little jay. He knew more than once, by the conduct of the old jays, that he was near the little blue creature; but plainly it had learned meanwhile to lie low and keep out of sight.

Later on, when its feathers were grown, it could fly so far and so fast that it was useless to chase after it. In a little while it could hardly be told from the rest of its kinsmen.

The man had no means of knowing whether it was this same jay that happened around one day considerably later, but it looked and acted just like him, at any rate.

The sparrows had some nests in the tin gutter under the eaves of a roof not far away. They were sitting on a roof and the edge of the eaves, when suddenly they went sailing in every direction.

## FIRST NEIGHBORS

Of course, the man was considerably surprised at their sudden and unexpected departure, but it was all soon fully explained. Mr. Blue Jay came sailing down, uttering blood-curdling screeches with every flap of his wings. He landed on that tin gutter, and screeched and pawed until the straw and the nests were piled in unutterable ruin. He raked the straw first in one direction and then in another, and heaped much of it out onto the ground.

The sparrows hid away in utter fright. They did not so much as sound a peep. The blue jay acted as, no doubt, you have seen human bullies act.

He dared any sparrow or all the sparrows. He offered to fight single or double, or all of them at once. He brandished beak and talons, and flirted his tail for emphasis. He shrieked and screeched, and dared and double-dared, until he seemed satisfied that no one contested his prowess. Then he sailed serenely to an elm, laughed in disdain at the sparrows, and was gone.

The intimidated sparrows came slowly

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

back, a few at a time, hesitating and fearsome. But when they found that the danger had



really passed, they sat and chattered as before, then proceeded to repair the nests.

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS





# V

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS

To the lover of nature, May is a glorious month. The earth has been renewed, and everything is in its brightest dress. The air is soft and balmy, the whole earth is fresh in its tender green, and there is a delightful perfume everywhere.

The man always has his garden planted by this time, and it is a pleasure to see how the plants are pushing along. The potatoes are thrifty and green and beginning to blossom, thereby telling us that the "spuds" are forming down under the ground. The pea-vines are white, that is, some of them, and we are thinking of the new peas and new potatoes the man will have ready before long.

It is a great thing to have a garden; but, if you can not have one of your own, the next best thing is to find somebody who has one, and who will invite you to enjoy with him some of the good things that grow in it.

And while the garden is making such fine

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

progress, we see that the grasses and weeds are making good headway, too; and so we are reminded that Satan comes also. But both he and the weeds must be circumvented. It



does not do to sit down and let the bad things get the upper hand.

Some of the weeds have redeeming aspects, as, witness the golden glory of the dandelion. Some people would not regard the blue violet as a weed, but the man finds that the vio-

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS

lets will interfere considerably with some of the things in his garden if he lets them have their own way; so he has to hoe and pull them up whenever they get in the way. Even then there are plenty of the plants left in corners and out-of-the-way places to help make the garden interesting.

Did you ever get real well acquainted with some of the weeds? Though undesirable, many of them are quite interesting neighbors, if you once learn the heart-secrets of their peculiar lives. We all have these queer neighbors, and I advise you to call on them if you have not yet done so.

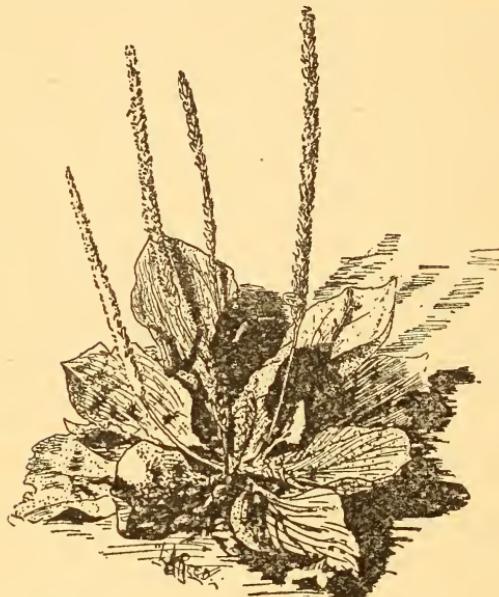
Now, there is the ground mallow. Notice how it hugs the earth in places where the lawn mower often runs. It seems to know it must keep down close to the ground or it will get its head cut off.

But if it happens to live among tall weeds and grasses, it grows out a long stem and pushes its round leaves away up above the crowd, so as to get its share of sunlight. Like Zaccheus, who was short of stature, and climbed a tree to see, over the heads of the

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

crowd, the Christ who came that way, the mallow grows a step-ladder and climbs out into the air and the light.

And then there is that pest of lawn and



garden, the plantain. There are a number of different kinds, but all of them are much alike. The plantain adapts itself with ease to various and varied surroundings. Like the mallow, if it grows in the uncut grass

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS

and weeds, the stem elongates, pushing the leaves high enough to get the sun and rain necessary for life. If it happens to grow on a closely cut lawn, its leaves hug the ground; and if the seed-stalk is repeatedly cut off, the plant puts up successively shorter ones, and, sooner or later, if not uprooted, produces a regular harvest of seed.

Notice, too, the broad leaves of the plantain; but broad and crinkled as they often are, their surfaces slope toward the midrib. And the stalk of the leaf is made for all the world like a rain-trough. So, you see, if a drop of dew or rain falls upon the leaves, it stands a good chance to roll down to the middle of the leaf, follow along the hollow of the leaf and its rain-trough stem, and thus reach the ground quite close to the root, there to freshen and strengthen the plant.

And if the weather is unusually dry, the leaves of the plantain become very much crinkled and twisted, so as to prevent the loss of water through the leaves as far as is possible. Thus the plantain lives and thrives when other plants shrivel up in the dry, hot

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS



days of midsummer. It can grow and bear seed in the hardest, driest spots you may come across. It needs but very little fertility, and the man can show you some of it growing in the coal cinders of his beaten driveway.

Did you ever examine the seeds of the dandelion? They have a plumpy balloon at one end, or perhaps I should call it a parachute; and there is a set of barbs or grappling irons at the other end. Carried by the wind, it floats through the air, parachute end up, and when it hits the grass or leaves, its barbs or grappling

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS

irons take hold, and so it grips and stays until it gets a turn into the dirt itself. No wonder there are so many dandelions in the world.



Now again, there is the thistle. It has a pretty pink top, and its forms have been woven by artists into many pictorial designs. The thistle is the Scottish national emblem, and is often worn by the patriotic. Some Scottish thistles are really beautiful.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

But thistles in gardens, no matter how artistic, are hardly quite the thing. There is very little trouble in the man's garden from the inroads of thistles. Now and then one starts up and has to be dealt with.

When the pretty pink or blue flower, or really flowers — for each head is made up of dozens of blossoms — I say, when the head ripens, it produces a lot of fluffy, feathery seeds. They sail away as gaily as so many birds, floating off on the summer winds to find more room in the wide, wide world beyond.

They are certainly adapted to increase rapidly, and in some places, if not dealt with energetically, become quite a menace. But labor conquers all things, even thistles.

I have never counted the number of seeds in a single thistle top, but I think there must be an exceeding great number. I think it would be an interesting task to count them, once a body had the time.

The man says that, if you take the trouble, you will find thousands of seeds in a single weed. He has counted over one thousand

## UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBORS

seeds in a single pod of the trumpet creeper. He has counted twenty thousand seeds on a single wild parsnip, and six thousand seeds on a little sow thistle, not two feet high; and three hundred and sixty thousand seeds on a mullen, and about seventy thousand seeds on a small white verbena.

The weeds have no gardener to make beds for them and to plant their seeds, so they have to produce an excessive quantity of seed whereby to offset all losses and still leave enough seeds to produce the weeds of another summer.

The Power over nature has determined that there shall be weeds, and we see the persistency of the Almighty Will in the wonderful means of seed sowing with which these common plants have been endowed.

And therefore the persistency of the weeds is, after all, only the persistency of that Almighty Will over nature which has determined their continued existence. And man, no matter how he strive or invent, will never fully defeat that Will in a complete destruction of all weeds.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

But weeds or no weeds, the man keeps hard at work and brings his crops to perfection. Though they hinder, they can not prevent. The weeds are persistent, but the man is also persistent, and he finds ways of outwitting them to a large extent. He says that they are garden neighbors of his that he would like to be rid of.

But he also says that possibly the weeds do more good in making changes in the soil than we think for, especially if we hoe them up and let them die and enrich the soil. It seems that there is hardly anything in this world that is all bad.

But whether the weeds help the soil much or nothing, they can surely give us some lessons in persistency and perseverance. And they can give us not a few suggestions on the matter of adaptability. They put up contentedly with their lot, make the most of their circumstances, and forever keep at it.

Every man who has a garden is sure to have some of the weeds as his neighbors.

## A MORNING LECTURE





## VI

### A MORNING LECTURE

One pleasant morning in early spring the man was strolling along the shore of a pond when his steps were arrested by the loud boom of a frog. He soon caught sight of the pond dweller just a short distance away.

“Boof! boof!” said the frog again, and swelled himself out with some importance.

It looked to the man much like a challenge, and so he responded.

“Ho, you are making a great fuss this morning, aren’t you?” said the man. “One would think from your noise and actions that you have a huge idea of your own importance, while the fact is that you are only an insignificant frog.”

“Insignificant!” it seemed to him the frog replied. “Insignificant, indeed! I am not so insignificant as you might think. I have my place and fill it.”

Again he swelled himself out and boomed as loudly as before.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

“Doubtless you fill your place,” the man thought in reply. “You can swell out big enough to fill twice as much space as one would think a frog would occupy.”

But the frog did not notice this sarcasm; he went on with his sermon, for sermon it seemed to be.

“Yes,” the frog apparently said, “I have my place and fill it; I know my place and keep it; and that, you will admit, is considerable. Now, I have experienced the value of little things in a way that I think you never did, though you think yourself so much greater than I. I was once but a little slimy egg, floating about in the water, and the real part of me was not much bigger than the point of a pin. I think I was rather insignificant then.” At this remark the frog swelled out as large as he could well do.

“After a while I became a tadpole, and wriggled about in the water. I had plenty of enemies, you may be sure, but I was always on my guard. I couldn’t do very much, but when anything made a lunge at me, I could beat the world at wriggling, and I always got away.



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, OR "THISTLE BIRD"



## A MORNING LECTURE

“Those days I lived under the water most of the time, and breathed water through my gills like a fish. But after a time I lost my gills, lost my tail, got four good legs, and finally became a frog, growing to be what I am now.

“Boof! boof! I couldn’t make a sound when I was a tadpole, but I can sing now. I think I am a pretty big fellow to come from nothing but a pin point, and I make even more noise than my size would indicate. And so I can say a few things out of my experience on the value of little things that some others can’t; therefore, I contend that I have a place in this big world of a pond.”

The man was about to go on, feeling that the frog had something the best of the situation, when he discovered that the frog apparently had not finished.

“But that is not the most important thing I can say to you this morning,” continued the frog. “There is something I can point to in my life, that, perhaps, you can’t. I always live strictly in harmony with the great laws of my life; do you do that?”

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The man could not say that he did; for instantly he thought of many things wherein he had violated the great laws of his being; therefore, he kept silent rather than confess that he did not do what a frog always does.

“For instance,” said the frog, “when I was a tadpole, and had gills and a tail, I didn’t try to live out in the air. Those days I never crawled out onto the bank, because I was made to live under water; for me to get out of the water, as I can now, would have been the death of me. If I had wriggled out onto the bank, I fear I would never have wriggled back again. I didn’t try to be a frog until I really was one.

“And now that I am a frog, I never try to be a tadpole. If I should stay under water very long, I should surely drown. If I should undertake to live now as I lived then, it would be my death. If there is anything that is absurd in this world, it is trying to be something that you simply can not be. I live according to the great laws of my life. I have my place, and fill it; I know my place, and keep it; do you?”

## A MORNING LECTURE

But the frog did not wait for an answer. "Boof! boof!" he said, and dived into the water.

He had seen a boy coming along the farther side of the pond; he had doubtless had an experience with boys, and so, true to



the great laws of his life, he hid away. He knew his place and found it.

As the man walked away, he was thoughtful. He realized as never before that every creature of the world has some lesson which, in its own peculiar way, it can teach us.

The man realized that the frog had learned to do what as yet he had not attained to. The

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

frog lived according to the great laws of his life. If a man should do that, how much it would mean. True to the laws of his body — that would mean health. True to the laws of his mind — that would mean mental vigor. True to the laws of his soul — that would mean sound character.

And all of this together would mean always and forever life, life, life. And what is that but eternity?

The man fears that it will be some time before he can do what the frog does; and until he can, he has determined never again to call the frog insignificant.

## A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR





## VII

### A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR

It was the month of June. The man had been at work in his garden. He did not care to work, however, for the weather was warm and delightful. He sat down to rest, or perhaps it was because he was getting lazy.

He was hardly seated when something on the ground near his feet attracted his attention.

Have you ever seen a pair of tumble-bugs? If so, you have seen one of nature's funny spectacles. They are odd things, these strange little beetles, and two of them had now attracted the man's attention.

We have inferred that the man was getting lazy. It looked that way now more than ever, for he just sat there and watched those funny beetles. They had a ball, and one of them was riding on top of the ball, and the other was standing pretty nearly on his head; at any rate, he stood on his front feet, his

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

hind feet kicking up in the air against the ball to make it roll; and when he kicked, the one on top of the ball leaned away over to help make it roll along.

If you had been near the man, you would have heard him talking to the bugs.

“Well, you are a nice set, aren’t you?” said the man. “Out here in my garden, kicking a ball of dirt around by way of exercise.

“Do you know from what heights you have fallen in the eyes of men? — I suppose not, and probably you don’t care, so long as you can kick that precious ball of dirt around. Nevertheless, you have fallen from a pretty high estate, I can tell you. These days you are mighty insignificant in the eyes of men. Once you were a sacred bug and something of a god; your name then, I believe, was scarabæus, or something like that.”

The man said this to the bugs, because tumble-bugs were once thought a great deal of in Egypt, some hundreds of years ago. Why yes, a little image of the tumble-bug was owned by each king of Egypt, and was

## A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR

called his seal. All the government papers and kings' orders and laws had to be stamped with the image of this bug or they were not considered any good.

Our government puts a seal on all its government papers; but it never has the picture of a tumble-bug on any of its seals, that is sure. I believe some of our government seals do have the picture of an eagle on them, and pictures of farmers or soldiers, and even of a house; but none of them I know of have on them the picture of a bug.

But the Egyptians not only had this image of the tumble-bug for their government seal and stamp; they also carved images of the bug on the solid rocks, or painted pictures of him on the papyrus, or Egyptian paper.

And in these days men dig down into the earth in that far-away land, and in those old crumbling buildings they find in almost any and every sort of place, pictures and images of the beetle. In many of those old dungeons they find the form of the bug carved in the rocks, standing there even yet in bold relief. In other places they find the picture

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

of the bug painted in the most beautiful colors, that appear to-day as clear and fresh apparently as when first painted — three thousand years ago.

Again, on the mummy cases and the sarcophagi, or Egyptian coffins, on beautiful and precious stones buried with them, and inside the wrappings of the mummies themselves, they find pictures and other representations of the tumble-bug.

Of course they did not call him tumble-bug then; they called him the sacred scarabæus.

The Egyptians seem like a very strange people to us. They thought a great many common things were holy or sacred. They thought the river Nile was sacred, and worshipped it as the representative of a god. They thought the ox was sacred, and kept some of them in their temples. And among the other things they venerated, were the funny tumble-bugs; and the tumble-bugs, it seems, were the most sacred things of all.

Strange, was it not? It seems almost as odd as the tumble-bug himself. But that is



BROWN CREEPER



## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

not all of the story concerning Egypt and the tumble-bugs.

The people of Egypt wore the image of the beetle in their rings and necklaces. They counted the number of the tumble-bug's toes and found there were thirty; they thought these thirty toes of the tumble-bug represented the days of their months, which were also thirty.

When the tumble-bug rolled its ball, they said that represented the motion of the sun on the earth. They also thought the bug represented life. And they worshipped the tumble-bug as long as it lived, and embalmed it, so as to keep it, when it died.

They were surely a queer people to think that way about bugs. But the bug is queer, too; and so it was queer bugs and queer people all together.

But we must not forget the man, sitting out there in the garden, watching the strange little tumble-bugs. He sat there and watched those bugs for a long time. He must have been a trifle queer, too; don't you think so?

"There you are," said the man, "up

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

against a bump. Kick a little harder, old man; kick a little harder. That's right. Now over it goes."

But Mr. Tumble-bug kicked too hard just then; for as soon as the ball went over the bump, away it rolled down a little incline. Mrs. Tumble-bug went rolling with it. She never let go her hold on the ball, though; no, indeed, not for a minute. Why should she? She was on top of the ball half of the time anyway. When the ball stopped, she quickly climbed into place again, and serenely waited for Mr. Tumble-bug. She would not have to wait for him very long, for he was coming on the run as fast as all his legs could carry him.

He did not even stop for breath. He simply got right down into line again, and with his solid kicking and her leaning her weight far over on the other side, the ball was immediately rolling again.

"Why don't you dig your hole and bury the ball right there?" asked the man. "It's as good a place as you will find in this garden. You will find the dirt fine and soft, for I have

## A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR

been digging it all up with the fork myself, and you can make quick work of it."

Of course the bugs did not pay any attention to the man. They neither understood nor cared what he said. The ground might be all right, but they had not as yet had enough exercise, and did not propose to stop. Mr. Bug kept right on with his vigorous kicking, and Mrs. Bug leaned over and helped roll the ball with all her weight.

"Oh-ho! And what will you do now?" asked the man.

The ball had rolled up against an obstacle which neither Mr. Tumble-bug's kick nor Mrs. Tumble-bug's pull could overcome. Kick, push, or pull, the ball would not budge.

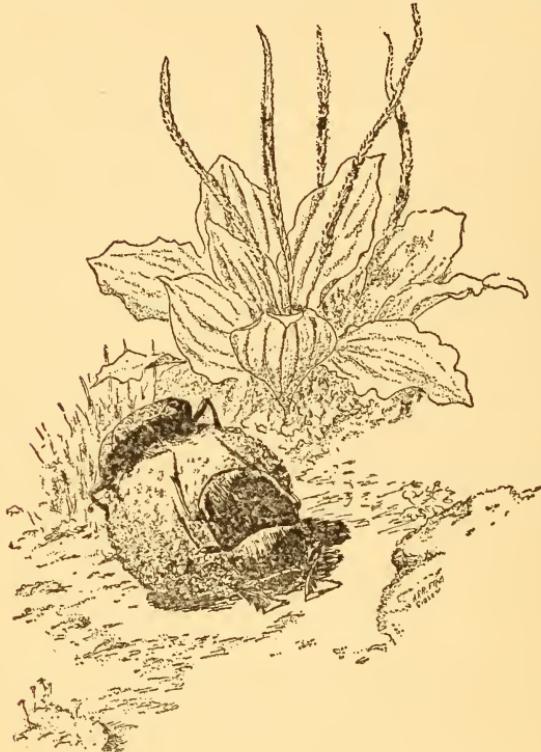
"Take a rest and try again," suggested the man.

But the bugs did not rest. They were lively and excited, and seemed to talk to each other. Mrs. Tumble-bug seemed to understand what her husband wanted, for she quickly got down, and joined him.

Down under that stubborn ball they both put their shovel-like heads, gave it a push

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and a pry, and over it went, rolling into the short grass. Quickly they had the ball again,



Mrs. Bug on the front seat, Mr. Bug pushing behind, and so the ball was kept rolling.

“Well, you beat anything I ever saw,” said the man at last. “I don’t think this is a case

## A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR

of brains at all, but just a sure case of kick-till-you-get-tired."

It seemed as if the man might be about right. When the bugs had a fine chance to roll the ball down hill and have an easy time, they chose to roll it up hill and have a hard time. And when they came to places that seemed perfectly suitable for burying the ball, they did not attempt to bury the ball at all, but kept it straight on, rolling it as lively as ever. And so the man began to think that Mr. Tumble-bug was going to kick until he got tired.

But perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Tumble-bug knew more about their own business than the man did. Perhaps they have a way of knowing where the ground is all right and where it is not. And perhaps the man thinks he knows better than the bugs, but really does not. Perhaps the bugs did not bury the ball in the soft ground where the man had been digging, because something told them that it had been dug up and might be dug up again, and their precious ball along with it. Who knows? I do not.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Anyway, the bugs did not pay the least bit of attention to what the man said, but kicked and pulled that ball of theirs to suit themselves.

Inside of that ball was an egg, all wrapped up safe and snug. And in that ball was enough food to keep the baby bug for some time after he hatched out. And that ball was made in such a way that it would be warm for a long time and keep the egg warm until it hatched. Men think they invented incubators, but tumble-bugs used incubators a long time, thousand of years, before men did. And gardeners think they are wise, because they can make hot-beds that keep plants warm in the early spring when the weather is quite cold; but tumble-bugs have used their little hot-bed of an egg-ball for ages and ages, and I think men simply saw how the tumble-bug did, and then went and tried the same thing to keep plants warm.

Well, the bugs are pretty careful where they bury that ball of theirs, for they do not want any harm to come to the egg inside, neither to the baby bug when it hatches out.

## A VERY ODD NEIGHBOR

"And so you have had enough of it, have you?" said the man. "It's about time, I think."

Yes, Mrs. Tumble-bug had at last found a place that just suited her, although nobody but herself knew why it was any better than lots of other places they had passed.

The ball had stopped rolling. Down under it the two bugs were rummaging around, poking at the ground, and examining it carefully. Everything seemed to be satisfactory, and so Mrs. Tumble-bug went to work to bury the ball.

So far, Mr. Bug had been doing all the hard work, and Mrs. Bug had been having a fine time riding on top of the ball. But after this, she did the work and Mr. Bug enjoyed himself, doing as he pleased.

Down under the ball she dug and ploughed, with the ball sometimes balanced upon her back. Then down she went out of sight in loose dirt, but was soon up again. Then once more she went down out of sight, this time going in upside down, pulling the ball in after her.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

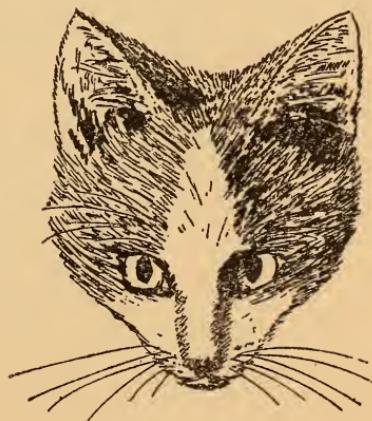
With her hind legs and front legs she pushed the dirt up and out, and slowly bug and ball sank out of sight into the earth.

“Well, there you go,” said the man. “Good-by, and good luck to you. May your egg hatch in first-class shape. After a while I suppose your son or daughter, whichever it is, will get out onto the ground, and some fine day have a ball of his own to kick or ride. I hope so at any rate; I wish you well. And here’s good-by again and good luck — provided you don’t get hoed up.

“Well, there’s wife calling me to dinner. Here I’ve lost an hour from my garden, watching tumble-bugs. And just look at the weeds.”

So saying, the man picked up his hoe and walked toward the house.

A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE





## VIII

### A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

It was entirely against the plans of the man even to allow a cat on the place, much less to have one of his own. But the man's plans, like those of mice, have sometimes to give way for the cat. It proved true in this case both for the man and the mice.

One day in the late fall the man's sister was sweeping the front sidewalk when she noticed a little boy on the opposite side of the street. He had two little kittens in his arms, and he came down to a house nearly opposite, and dropped the two kittens over the fence into the yard.

The man's sister saw what the boy had done, and noticed the kittens lying on the grass inside the neighbor's fence. She went at once to where the boy stood.

"What are you going to do with them?" she asked, as she looked at the tiny kittens.

"O, we had so many we didn't want these, so I throwed 'em away," was his reply.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The woman looked at the two little balls of fur. They were certainly attractive-looking kittens.

“ May I have one of them? ”

“ I don’t keer,” said the boy. “ I don’t keer who has ‘em.”

“ Kitty, kitty, nice little kitty.”

One of the kittens thus accosted looked up at the woman, meowed, and blinked its eyes. The woman smiled, reached down her hand, and the kitten came to her at once. It was white with dark spots, and its eyes were brighter and its face more prepossessing than its mate. The woman took it in her arms.

“ I believe I’ll keep this one,” she said.

The boy stood and watched the woman until she had carried the kitten across the street, then took a sharp look at the other one in the yard, and broke into a lively run away from the place.

Of course, when the man came home that night, he found the kitten in the house, and his sister all enthusiastic over her great prize. The man looked at the creature pretty doubtfully. He thought of when it would get

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

larger and the havoc it might work among the birds of the garden.

But the kitten was such a tiny thing now, and his sister was so set upon keeping it, now that she had once gotten it, that it was hard for the man to refuse; then, too, the house was getting to be overrun with mice, which were being driven in from the fields by the cold weather.

If it had been left to the man to bring it about, the cat would never have been allowed in the house. But now, without any doing on the part of the man, the kitten was not only in the house, but so bound up in the plans and desires of the man's sister that the case was a trifle hard to manage.

It was not long before the fluffy bit of fur caught a mouse. It was comparatively a new piece of business, for the tiny creature carried that mouse with a pride at once charming and amusing. Ears erect, body stately, tail on dress parade, it marched about the room with that mouse, admired and praised by the whole household.

"He has begun pretty young," said the

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

man. "It looks as if he is going to be death on the mice. Perhaps it will be all right to keep him. It can't do harm this winter, anyway."

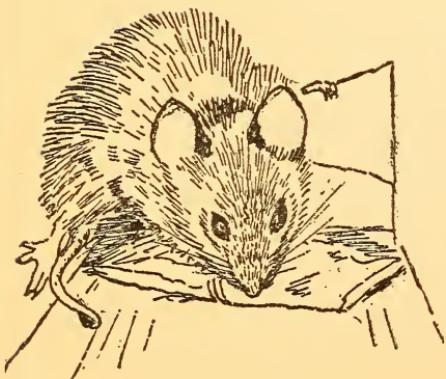
And so the kitten was given a home. For so tiny a creature he truly was death on the mice. But he had one trick with the mice he caught that went directly against the feelings of the man; it seemed so cruel.

When the little thing had once captured a mouse, it would play with the unfortunate thing for a half hour, more or less. It was sickening to the man to see that poor, mangled, crippled mouse crawl about the room and be tossed and chewed just to satisfy the whims of a kitten.

It looked like a blot on creation to see this daily exhibition of depravity on the part of a seemingly harmless kitten. The man tried

to philosophize and moralize, to specialize and generalize; he meditated and cogitated, and became agitated.

Nevertheless, the kitten



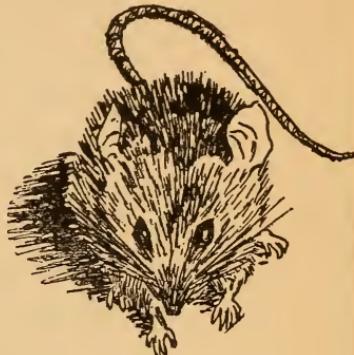
## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

would still play with the captured mouse, to the utter demoralization of the unfortunate captive, and to the great perplexity and sorrow of the man.

At last the man determined to stop some of this cruelty of the kitten. He had noticed that as soon as the mouse was really dead, the kitten at once proceeded to devour it without any further parleying.

Therefore, one day, weary of the sight, the man seized a stick, and, when the cat and the mouse were not too badly mixed up for him to get at the latter, he delivered a telling blow that quickly laid out the mouse. Then the kitten, discovering that the mouse was dead, at once made a meal of it.

After having killed one or two of the mice, the cat seemed to get a new idea. As soon as it had caught a mouse, it would bring the thing at once to the man to be killed. Of course, it didn't take the man very long to do that, and so the torture all ceased after that if the man was around.



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The minute the mouse was dead, the kitten was ready to eat it; and as the kitten always brought the mouse to be killed as soon as captured, it looked to the man that the kitten's play with the mouse was merely because it did not know what else to do with it, not being old and vicious enough to kill it in cold blood.

When the little creature saw a mouse, its instincts told it to seize the thing before it got away. Then, having seized it, it found it had an elephant on its hands, so to speak, and did not know what to do with it. If it laid the mouse down, the mouse tried to run away, and so was seized again. This seemed like fun to the kitten.

The man had seen older and meaner cats crush a mouse in cold blood, but the kitten never attempted anything of the kind. It preferred to let the man do that, for it was a gentle creature, except with mice, and with even them it was willing to be as gentle as its instincts would allow. So, if the man would kill the mice, it would bring them to the man and the stick as soon as caught. It made times lively for the man more than once.

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

If the man was not at home, the kitten tried the women. Sad to relate, however, the women did not encourage this humane conduct of the cat, but grabbed up their skirts, gave a yell, and left both cat and mouse in indiscriminate haste.

It was a rather discouraging way to treat the trust of a cat. But even women are sometimes inconsiderate. It is not strange that the cat soon ceased to seek the services of the women, and patronized only the man, provided he was at home. If he was not, why, of course, the mouse had to roll around a while until some way in the scramble it died. Once dead, the kitten — well, enough has been said.

Of course, Kitten-cat, as the man called him, had some faults, and had to be corrected once in a while. For example, the kitten had a habit of going into the sitting-room and getting up on the sofa pillows.

There is no doubt that the pillows made a nice soft feather-bed for a cat, but it was bad for pillows, and soiled the choicest of them and mussed them up generally.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Consequently, the man's sister cuffed Kitten-cat a few times for getting on the pillows. After that he not only stayed off the pillows, but kept entirely out of the sitting-room.

It became quite amusing in time to see how persistently the kitten avoided this room thereafter. The family spent the most of their evenings in the sitting-room, and the cat would get very lonesome staying alone in the other rooms.

When the kitten had stood it as long as he possibly could, he would come and sit in the doorway and look in at the people. Or, if the door was partly open, rather than come in the room far enough to peer around the door, he would stay in the other room and look through the crevice between the door and the casing.

The cat generally obeyed the man as well as or better than anybody else; so one evening he decided to tempt the cat a little to see if it would enter the room. He stooped down in the middle of the room, held out one hand, and coaxed the kitten to come. It was a great temptation to the creature, for it was a habit

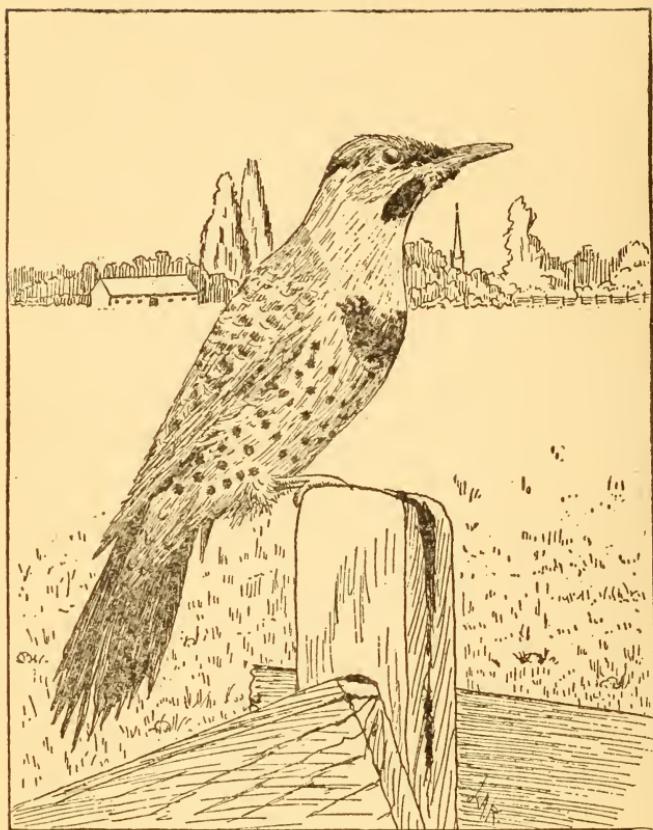
## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

with him always to go to the man when he gave him this sort of invitation. But it was also now a habit with the kitten to keep entirely outside of the sitting-room. Thus the poor creature found himself in a strait betwixt the two, and knew not what to do. Consequently, Kitten-cat made quite a demonstration, yowed, moved about nervously, yowed again, looked yearningly at the man, and finally made one or two steps inside.

Just at this critical moment, the cat caught sight of the man's sister, who was interestedly watching the whole affair. He looked at the woman, and the woman looked at him. It was enough, for he went back and sat down in the doorway as before.

But there was the man, still stooping and coaxing him to come. So, casting reflection and caution to the winds, he walked straight across to the man, allowed his caresses, rubbed against him down one side and back the other, and went back to the doorway, and sat down as at first.

Pleased with his victory, the man kept on coaxing. Then some of the spectators



FLICKER

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

laughed, and, apparently offended at everybody, Kitten-cat whirled about and walked away to the kitchen.

In time, the cat learned to stand erect on its hind legs and walk half way across the room when promised something to eat. It would stand on its hind legs and paw a morsel of food out of the closed fist of the man. When it first learned to play, it did not seem to know how sharp were its claws and teeth; but in a little while it managed someway to learn that its claws must always be kept well up in their natural cushions and that its teeth must always be used with moderation.

One thing made it very easy to correct the cat, because it was so timid. A little scolding, a few slaps of the hand, were always amply sufficient to subdue it. It made not the slightest attempts at resistance after that.

His timidity and love of peace were what always won the battle with him in every test. The first time a dog came into the house, he acted as if he were going into hysterics or a cat fit or something equally bad.

This timidity always kept the cat very close

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

at home and, much of the time, inside of the house. Once, in the early spring, the cat seemed out of sorts and lost its appetite. Then the man decided to take him over by the railroad track to a spot where grew some catmint. The man had an idea that if Kitten-cat once learned where the "catnip" grew, it would go there for it later whenever it pleased.

But the cat was afraid, even in the arms of the man, to leave the place, and began to claw to get away. He seemed very much frightened at the prospect of going into a strange country. He had never been so far away from home before. He struggled and clawed, until it was all the man could possibly do to hold him.

Man and cat had gotten hardly a block away when a dog came out into the road after them and barked. That settled it. The cat could not be gotten to the catnip, so the catnip had to be brought to the cat.

As the spring advanced, Kitten-cat spent more and more time each day out of doors. He chased the birds in every direction, and gradually ventured farther and farther in his

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

attempts to capture them. Finally he seemed to gain a spirit of self-reliance, and chased the birds wherever their winged flights might take him.

The man laughed at the cat's efforts to catch the birds. The man knew that birds could never be caught that way; but he forgot that even cats sometimes learn from experience. So the cat was given free rein, and tried vainly day after day to catch at least one bird.

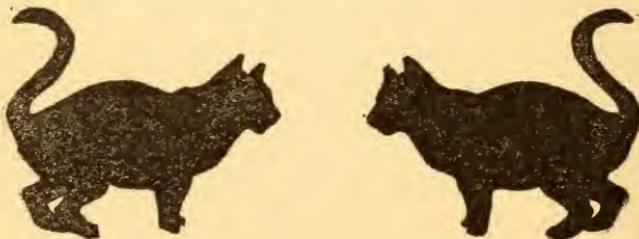
He ran at the birds as they flew by. He jumped in the air to seize them as they came near. He tried to catch them unawares while they sat on the fence. He crawled after them as they were feeding or drinking on the ground. But his white color and black spots made him so conspicuous that he had no chance whatever of catching them off guard. The birds usually saw the cat before he had covered a third of the intervening distance. They not only flew away, but in some cases actually mocked the cat, who seemed to understand the insult, and waxed indignant and full of wrath.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

About this time the man noticed that he could no longer play with the cat as of old. He seemed nervous, and, if the man attempted to play with him, made protest which ended eventually in some scratches and bites that, to the man, were quite unwelcome. The cat was slowly losing its gentleness, as well as its timidity and love of peace.

It had begun the work of making war,—a war on the birds,—that knew no cessation from morning until night. A strange sort of wildness was creeping into its nature and character. It began to be disobedient, artful, cunning, deceptive.

The man became alarmed, and sought to stop the bad work begun, but it was too late. Every effort he made in the way of attempting to check the cat, ended in utter failure. It was impossible to watch the cat only on



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occasions. And hour by hour these efforts were being neutralized by a steady, determined effort on the part of the cat to make war on the birds. Hour by hour it made every effort that a cat's brain could invent.

Some wrens built a nest that summer in the box on the pole. The cat spent hours at a time chasing after those wrens. When the cat came near the pole and the nest, the wrens had a queer way of flying down almost within reach of him and then off again in a tantalizing way that put the cat into a perfect tremor and frenzy of excitement. It was their way of enticing the cat away from the nest and the young wrens. It certainly worked, but it was demoralizing to the cat; it seemed to make him sure that in time his patience would be rewarded, since each time he came so near to seizing the feathered prey.

And that was not all of it, for the wrens had a queer way, also, of keeping up a constant, scolding chatter, which the cat attempted to answer in kind. They would alight near the cat and chatter as only a wren can. The cat would rise up as high as it could,

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open its lips and bare its teeth, then chatter as nearly like the wrens as a cat ever can. At such times its whole body would quiver with the intensity of its excitement. It would become so eager that it would attempt impossible things, and threaten to go mad. Too much excitement is not good for anybody, not even a cat.

The results of all this were only too plainly being seen in the changing nature of the cat. It was absolutely impossible to pet him at all. Any attempt to do it would call forth a warning cry and show a nervousness and a wildness that were positively forbidding.

But the cat caught no birds, not one. After spending hours and days and no end of labor and subtlety in vain, the cat seemed to realize that it might as well quit or find some other way. Many a cat has reached this same point of experience and given up the task as a hopeless one, but not so with this cat. He was made of sterner stuff. He had too much of his wild progenitor's blood in his nature ever to give up while a bird flew and he had his living powers.

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

I know not how he learned the way, perhaps by chance, but learn he certainly did, and it was a way that was most fatefully effective. He found how even birds may be caught quite easily — even though the cat is white and has black spots. He discovered that cunning could do what strength and agility never can do. It was a long, waiting game, that took much patience and self-control. Nevertheless, it got the birds, and so it paid.

The cat had learned a lesson that it is often supposed only man can learn. Many a man has learned that brains will often do what muscles alone can never do. And many other men know that this is



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so, but find it easier to work their muscles than to work their brains.

It was quite a secret for a cat to discover, but nothing is more certain than that it did discover this very thing. We are not writing fiction, but fact. In the realm of nature-study and descriptions, nothing else will do; all else is misleading and pernicious.

Having learned the great secret, the cat stopped jumping into the air when a bird went by. He stopped his stealthy prowling after one when it alighted on the ground. He stopped chasing the wrens all about the yard. He began a new set of tactics.

He found some places where there were more birds than in other places. He frequented these places. And he came back with birds. How did he accomplish it?

One day the man saw the cat disappear in a clump of grass. The cat remained away some time. The man was busy with his work and an hour went by. Still the cat was not to be seen.

Then the man went over to the clump of grass — the secret was out. The cat buried

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himself in the grass, and when the birds came down to feed, he seized them promptly without fuss or failure.

Of course, it was a waiting game that took self-control and patience. Such a secret, however, once in the possession of such a cat, you may be sure there would follow plenty of trouble for the bird world.

The cat would carry all the slaughtered birds to a place under the back porch, and there leave the bones and feathers. By this means the man knew just how many birds the cat was getting each day.

It was a sad record. Some days the cat would get but one bird, some days as high as three, and finally, in one afternoon it caught five! That determined the man to do what for some time he had been meditating. The man loved the birds. He had watched them for years. More than this, it had been against the man's plans from the first to have a cat on the place, and now he owned a cat that could beat any other in the country for the slaughtering of birds.

So the man decided that the cat must die.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

It would take all the nerve he could muster to do it, for he had learned to think a great deal of the cat. But he loved the birds, too, and it was the life of one cat against the lives of perhaps hundreds of birds.

The man had been saddened as he had seen the cat being slowly transformed into a wild, savage, plundering creature. He had watched the cat go slowly to the bad. He had been powerless to prevent the sad ruin of a creature that once was almost an ideal kitten. Obedience, honesty, gentleness,—these had been the cat's cardinal virtues; but they were slowly being sacrificed for the wild, savage prompting that pushed the cat on to its end. It was a deplorable case of a cat's downfall, and all because of its appetite for birds.

Of course, in a sense, the cat was but following its nature, but it was to the utter perversion of all the good and best that belonged to it.

If the man would have had to use violence, I do not think he would ever have attempted to destroy the cat. But there was a way to do it easily, with chloroform.

## A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

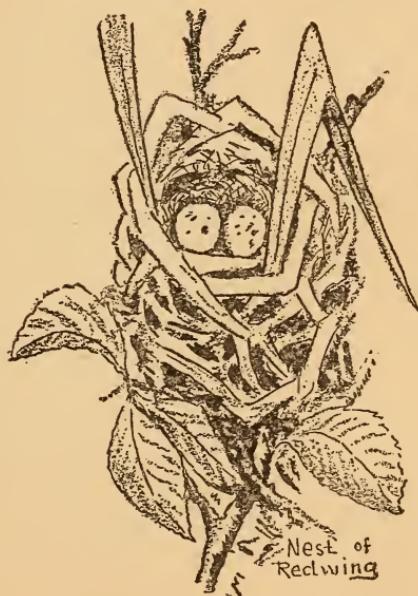
He waited. He hoped that the cat would quit. And while he hoped and waited, the cat killed birds.

One day the cat brought in two robins, a wren, a rose-breasted grosbeak, and a bluebird. That ended it.

You may not like the way the man did with the cat. Perhaps you would care more for the cat than for the birds. But he loved the birds, and he simply could not bear to see his cat going thus to the bad.



## MRS. SPINNER





## IX

### MRS. SPINNER

By the man's back porch there were a number of wild cucumber vines, and among these vines last summer Mrs. Spinner set up house-keeping. She was a quiet, wary little body, and it was not the easiest thing in the world to catch her at her work. She cares nothing whatever about making the acquaintance of human beings; she minds her own business, and hopes you will mind yours.

She has a private chamber where she prefers to remain during the daytime, coming out into her reception-room only after sunset. At such times she wears an evening gown of pink with brown and white trimmings.

One thing about her, however, is rather peculiar, and that is the fact that she has eight legs — four times as many as you and I have. It is no wonder, then, that she can move around on her rope ladders so swiftly and easily.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

At the ends of her feet she has three hooked claws as sharp as those of a cat, and beside these a number of fine, sharp needles. Surrounding both her claws and spines is a lot of long, stiff hairs. It is with these hooked feet of hers that she holds on to walls and to her strange spider webs. She can do things no trained athlete or acrobat ever could learn to do.

She uses her feet, much as the carpenter uses his tools, in building her house of spider silk. Besides, she uses her feet to hold her food up to her mouth while she eats, for she has no fingers, as you have.

And when she wants to brush the dust off her pink gown, she does not ask to borrow a clothes-brush, but simply brushes off the dust with the soft brushes of hairs that she carries on her legs.

If you wonder what else she does with these eight legs and feet of hers, just watch her some evening shortly after sundown, and I think you will find that she has use for every one of them. In fact, you will find it as hard to watch at once all eight of her legs as it



MALE AND FEMALE REDWING BLACKBIRD



## MRS. SPINNER

would be to watch all the doings in a three-ring circus.

Another strange thing about her is that her teeth and tongue are outside of her mouth instead of inside. I think the reason for this is that she wants more room for them than her mouth can allow for. Just think what would happen if some people should find more room for their tongues than they now have!

Since Mrs. Spinner's teeth and tongue are outside of her mouth, all of her food has to be chewed before it goes inside. For this purpose she has what seems like a short pair of legs just in front of her real legs with which she holds her food while it is being chewed. These are called her palps. At the base of the palps is a set of teeth. And as if this was not enough teeth, she has two more sets, fastened to the front of her head, on what are called the mandibles.

And at the outermost corner of the mandibles, Mrs. Spinner carries a spear, for she is a great body to go hunting; in fact, she makes her living by hunting and trapping game.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

This spear is kept sharp at all times, and will pierce through any insect she comes across. You have heard about poisoned arrows which, if they but scratch a person, will cause certain death. Well, Mrs. Spinner poisons her spear before she strikes with it. Sharp as that spear is, at the tip is a tiny opening, seen only with a microscope, and through that slight opening she can send a tiny jet of liquid poison into the body of her wounded enemy.

Of course, Mrs. Spinner never kills things just for the fun of killing, although boys and men often do. She kills insects, such as flies and mosquitoes, of which we already have too many, and eats them for food. And besides this, she uses her weapons to defend herself when attacked by an enemy.

A great many persons tell bad stories about being poisoned by spiders, but it is generally something else than spiders, for no spider will use her poison fang on a human being, unless she has been first attacked, and so is compelled to bite in self-defense.

And if you were bitten by a spider, it would

## MRS. SPINNER

have little effect upon you. The poison certainly makes quick work in killing flies and insects of various sorts, but it would only make your flesh smart or burn for a little time, somewhat like the sting of a bee.

You remember that Mrs. Spinner has plenty of teeth. As they are outside her mouth, she has ample room in which to use them; she chews for hours at a time. Mrs. Spinner never eats anything but liquid food, and it often takes a long time to grind her food up fine enough to be swallowed.

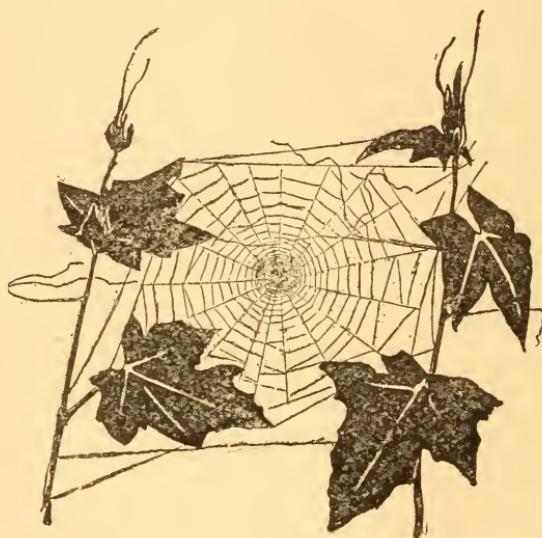
Although Mrs. Spinner has eight eyes, she can not see with them all as well as you can with your two. She can not see things far away at all, but she can see things behind her without turning round, and that is something you can not do.

The man and his wife often watched Mrs. Spinner build her house just at evenfall. I will tell you how she usually did it. She stood on the right side of the open space between the vines, and ran out a long, loose stream of silk. For a moment or two she allowed the breeze to carry it out from her

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

queer spinning machine, then with a peculiar quick movement of her body she made it fast to the vine.

Then, holding one of the threads with the claw of her foot, she waited for it to catch on



a vine to the left of the open space. Every now and then she pulled gently on the streaming thread, and rolled some of it up with her palps until she felt it pull tight. The web had caught on a rope that held up the wild

## MRS. SPINNER

cucumber vine. Then she made a trip over to see where the line ran.

Wrong side up, she slid along the single rope of silk, walking with six feet and using the other two in managing the new thread she was spinning. Back and forth she went several times, running a new line each time, until she had a firm cable for the upper support of her house.

She has no chalk with which to make marks, as the carpenter does, but she has another way of doing it that serves quite as well. About the middle of the upper line she placed a little wad of white silk. The next trip across, when she came to this white dot, she dropped loose of the upper line and hung only by the thread she was spinning. She dropped until she reached a leaf near the bottom of the open space between the vines.

After this she moved from one point to another outside the open space and strengthened the outer ropes thoroughly, for these were to support her new home. She was next ready to put in the spokes, for her house was to be made in the form of a wheel.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Beginning at the white dot of silk in the middle of the first line of threads she wove, she moved down the thread by which she had formerly dropped from this point, and, about half way of its length, she placed a second wad of silk. This was to mark the hub, or center, of her wheel.

From this central point she ran out to the edge, made a turn, and came back to the center, thus forming the first spoke. She did not make the spokes all around, one after another, in regular order; that generally would not have done at all. She was all the time on the lookout to keep her wheel from getting one-sided and thus have it pulled out of shape.

Sometimes she put them rather far apart, and again she placed them in almost opposite directions from one another. Then when they were about all in, she felt around from one to another, as if to know if any more were needed. Trying them a few times and fixing them to suit, she seemed satisfied with that part of the work.

Now she was ready for the circular lines. You remember that when she wanted to mark

## MRS. SPINNER

the center, she used a wad of silk; but there seems no way for her to chalk off the places where the new lines are to go; nevertheless, she knows a way.

Carpenters use a scaffolding with which to construct parts of buildings they could not otherwise reach, and Mrs. Spinner has her scaffolding, too. The designer lays in his design with a number of rough lines to indicate the general design, and the spider has her way of roughly chalking out the designs of her house.

She began at the hub and moved around and around from one spoke to another, spinning and fastening her threads as she went. This first set of spiral lines is very difficult to see in the twilight, but if you look sharp, you can make it out. This first spiral is not to remain, but is put in merely as the designer puts in rough lines to suggest the design that is to be, or as the carpenter makes a scaffolding by which to construct the real building.

These spiral lines stood much farther apart than the permanent lines were to stand. Having these lines of the wide spiral all in, she

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

was now ready for the second and last spiral. She started the first spiral from the center, but this last one she began from without.

Around and around she goes without any hesitation and without making a single mistake. She does her work better than you will ever do yours. It is humiliating, is it not? And she only a spider.

Often and often the man has watched Mrs. Spinner put in these spiral lines. The first wide spiral seems to help her to know just where to put the new spiral. She puts the last one in much closer than she did the first; with the first, the lines were far apart; with the second, they are less than a quarter of an inch apart.

As fast as the old spiral gets in the way of the new one, she pulls it up to her mouth with her front feet, rolls it into a ball, chews it awhile, and drops it to the ground. This is her way of tearing down her scaffolding and of rubbing out the rough lines of her strange design.

Another thing the man discovered, and that was the fact that the spokes and foundation

## MRS. SPINNER

threads of the web were made of dry and inelastic silk, while the spiral is made of sticky, stretchy threads.

It would never do to have a house made of sticky, stretchy threads, for it would soon be pulled out of shape. Mrs. Spinner is wise enough to lay the foundations of her house with dry, inelastic threads that are sure to stay in place.

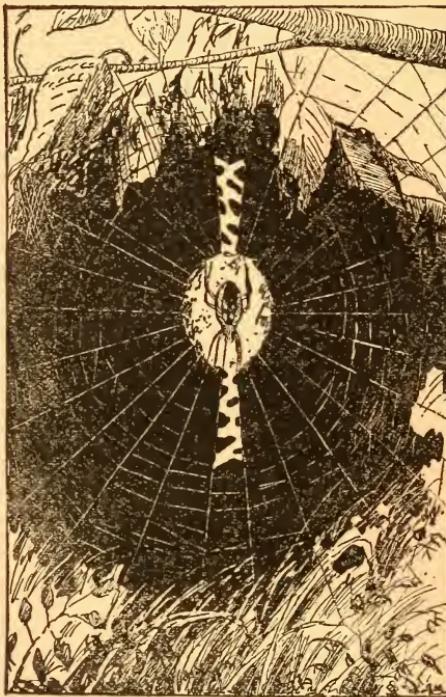
But the spiral is for the purpose of catching her prey, and it must be sticky, so as to hold the flies and other insects, and it must be stretchy, so as not to be broken easily and so as not to put too great strain upon the spokes and the foundation threads of the house.

There is no question about it; Mrs. Spinner's house is very wisely made. And up at one corner, formed of the growing leaves of the vine, she builds her private mansion, where she stays during the day. You may brush away her webs every morning, but she is safe in her snug retreat, and at night she will come forth again and weave another web.

After the blackberries had been picked, the man noticed one day a huge spider web built

## MRS. SPINNER

among the berry vines. It had a web at least two feet across, and with a queer zigzag white band across the middle. The spider itself



was brightly marked with black and yellow.

The reason the man had not noticed this spider before was because in the early part of the summer it is smaller, and it makes only

## MRS. SPINNER

a small web that hardly anybody happens to see unless he hunts for it.

The spider that built by the wild cucumber vines is called the garden spider. The one that built in the blackberry vines is called the autumn spider. She is called autumn spider because she is not noticed until toward autumn, and some people once thought she visited us only at that time.

While she is getting her growth, she dresses in a modest suit of black and white. But when she gets grown up, she puts on bright yellow and black. The hub of this spider's web is fully four inches across, and above it and below it is the zigzag band of white. The band seems to be a brace to hold the web, steady.

And indeed she needs a strong web for when the man came near her so as to startle her she would swing herself, web and all, back and forth, faster and faster. She does not swing this way just for the exercise, but only when she is frightened, as when a bird tries to snatch her for its dinner. She swings back and forth so swiftly that the bird is com-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

elled to give up in despair and to hunt its dinner elsewhere.

There are many other kinds of spiders that may be found every summer in the man's garden, and for that matter, in anybody's garden. Only the mother spiders spin webs, and that is why we call her Mrs. Spinner.

The Bible says that the spider takes hold with its hands and is found in king's palaces. No place is so elegant but the spiders find their way there, and no place is so humble but they find it suitable to their purpoess.

The spiders can teach us lessons we have hardly as yet begun to learn.

THE NEIGHBOR IN RED





# X

## THE NEIGHBOR IN RED

The Cardinal belongs especially to the South, but he does not stay where he is supposed to belong; no, not by any means.

One cold day in December, when the garden was a sheet of snow and ice, the man went out to cut down an old peach tree that he had condemned to death. In the first place, it was a useless old tree, half rotten, and had long since ceased to bear peaches. In the second place, it had shaded a part of the garden during the past summer and about ruined a lot of tomato plants.

There were several new peach trees along the line of the north fence where they could not shade the garden, and so the old tree would never be missed.

The man raised the ax and struck the tree a sounding whack that made the old trunk shiver.

Whir-r-r! went something out of the top of the broken, rotten end of the stub. The

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

man looked in surprise. It was an English sparrow. The scared bird had built himself a nest in a hole that either he had found or burrowed there.

Talk about feather beds! The inside of that hole was just packed with chicken feathers. That sparrow must have been a week or two picking them up, one by one, about the country, for the man does not keep chickens.

It was certainly too bad to be driven out of doors in such weather, for it was very cold, and the sun was well along in the western sky. How would you like it to be turned out of bed and house on a cold winter's afternoon to hunt any old place you could find?

Well, just about that time the cardinal came along. I do not know whether he understood how the sparrow had been misused or not; but, anyway, he made some remarks that the man thought were certainly meant for him.

If you do not know it, let me tell you that the cardinal can whistle, in a startling way, sounds that seem almost like words.

This time the cardinal seemed to be angry.



SCARLET TANAGER

SUMMER TANAGER

CARDINAL GROSBEAK

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

DOWNTY WOODPECKER



## THE NEIGHBOR IN RED

If he understood what had happened, he had reason to be.

“Look here! look here!” whistled the cardinal.

Of course the man did look. But Mr. Cardinal did not seem at all afraid to talk up to the man. The bird came a little nearer, tipped his head to one side, and flirted his tail. Then he whistled again.

“See here! see here!”

“Well,” said the man to himself, “I guess I have stirred up a bit of a tempest. I certainly did not mean any harm to the bird fraternity.”

The man stepped back a pace or two, and paused again to hear the cardinal whistle once more. This time the words seemed somewhat different.

“You fear! you fear!”

At this the cardinal whisked about and sounded a “chip” of seeming indignation.

“Come here! come here!” screamed the cardinal.

But the man was of a peaceable nature, and did not intend to quarrel with any bird,

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

much less the cardinal. And so he begged to be excused.

The man has wondered since if the cardinal was so cross about the sparrow, or if he



was merely objecting to the noise that the ax had made when it struck such a sounding whack on the old dried peach tree.

But however it was, the cardinal did not seem to hold his resentment very long. That night was one of the coldest nights of winter,

## THE NEIGHBOR IN RED

and the next morning the garden looked more frosty than ever. Nevertheless, the cardinal was on hand quite early.

“Good cheer! good cheer!” he whistled.

The man heard it before he sat down to breakfast, opened the door, and looked out.

“Good cheer! good cheer!—three cheers! three cheers!” whistled the cardinal, and went sailing away, to disappear beyond the garden fence.

“Just look at the courage of him,” said the man softly to himself. “That clear, merry whistle on a cold morning like this puts courage into even a man.”

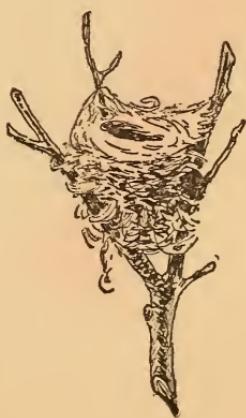
Again came the notes of the cardinal. He was sounding his rich, rolling, rollicking melody.

“Three cheers! three cheers! three cheers!”

Cold weather did not make him gloomy; he was not a particle worried; he was *singing*. What a lesson to the caretaker! O, to be in such spirit as the cardinal! O, to make as well of things as he does! O, to face drear aspects with a heart as glad as his, and a tune as cheery!



## IMPOSING ON OTHERS





## XI

### IMPOSING ON OTHERS

Our plans do not always work out just as we had hoped. There are many disappointments awaiting us all, many of them as great as our strength can endure. Life does not run smoothly anywhere.

Why, then, should we expect to see everything in the bird-world go according to our ideas? Wherever you find life, there you find an element of sadness and of tragedy.

There is one bird that seems like a blot on a part of God's fair creation, and whose doings have stirred more than one man's sense of justice. The creature guilty of such high misdemeanors is the cowbird.

The man will not soon forget the first time he saw a mother cowbird. He wondered what kind of bird it was. He noted that it was of a dark brownish-gray color, somewhat lighter below. He did not know enough about birds to identify it.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

But there were two things about it that seemed quite different from any other birds he had seen. One of these was the short, thick bill, and the other was its very stealthy movements. Its actions aroused his suspicions at once; it seemed to his notion more like a sneak than a bird. Since then he has learned what a scoundrel the bird is, and does not wonder at its sneaking ways.

Do you know the reason of this conduct of the cowbird? It certainly must be because the creature is up to something that is not strictly honest. That is the way it looks, and in this case the looks do not in the least deceive. It is a very sad case; but I will tell you about it.

First of all, you must know that the cowbird never builds a nest of its own. It hunts about among the trees and bushes until it finds the nest of some other bird, and when the mother is gone from the nest, the cowbird just drops an egg into the nest, and slips away as slyly as it can.

Generally, or at least often, when the mother bird comes back to the nest, she does

## IMPOSING ON OTHERS

not seem to notice the new egg; or, if she does notice it, she does not seem to know what to do about it, and keeps right on taking care of her eggs, and the cowbird's egg along with the rest.

If the cowbird would only choose a bird somewhere more nearly its own size, it would not seem quite so bad; but the shrewd cunning that teaches the cowbird to impose on other birds leads her to choose birds considerably weaker than herself. And yet, if no others are available, she will use the nest of almost any bird that happens to be at hand.

Is it not a shame that a bird should be so lazy or so unnatural, so to speak, as to act like a tramp and a hobo? Instead of building a home of her own, she steals into somebody's else home. Instead of taking care of her own children, she pushes them off onto other birds. And then she gads about and gossips instead of being at home and behaving herself.

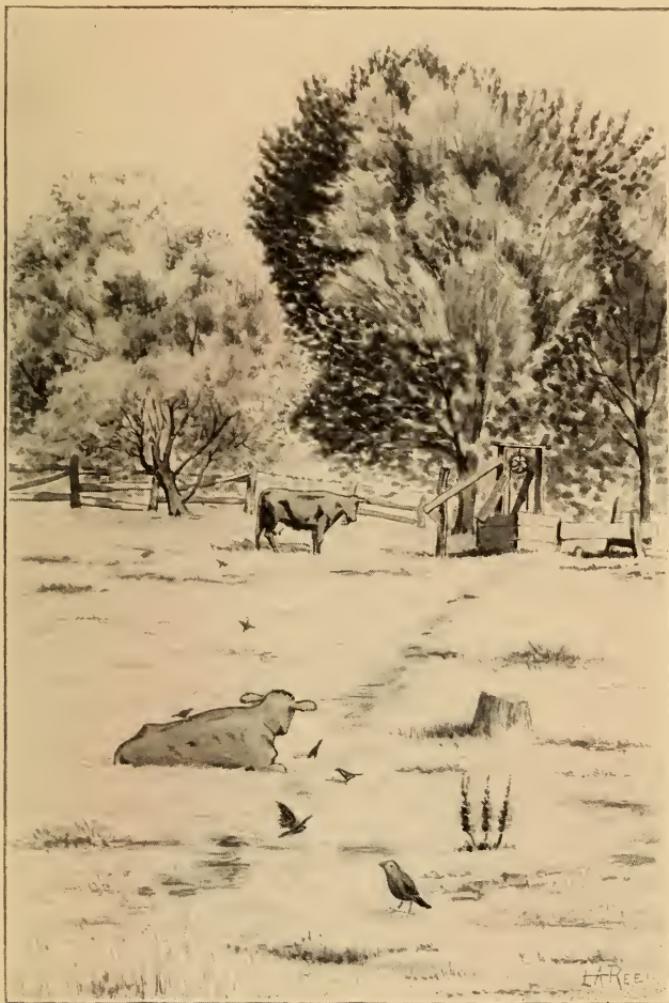
The father cowbirds are so black, or nearly black, that as likely as not you have seen them a number of times and called them black-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

birds. Sometimes they perch on the backs of the cows, hunting for flies, lice, and similar tempting morsels, and this is why they are called cowbirds. Out West they used to be called buffalo birds. It is said that you will hardly find a bunch of cattle on the Western prairies now but has its attendant cowbirds.

Let me tell you about some of the wrong-doings of the mother cowbird. Once upon a time a sparrow built a nest in a hollow of a grassy bank, so hidden by the dried leaves and grass and so confused with its surroundings that it was hard to find even when you once knew its location. I doubt whether anybody would have found it, only that the bird was seen carrying material to the place, and by watching her long and faithfully, the nest was discovered.

The second day there was one little brown-spotted egg in the nest. The mother bird was gone, and the man who watched had his eyes wide open, and that is why he saw in a thicket a sneaking mother cowbird. She was prowling about in the underbrush and leaves, look-



COWBIRDS



## IMPOSING ON OTHERS

ing for a nest, and she found this nest of the song-sparrow.

Having discovered the nest, the cowbird peered all about, and seeing that there was no one to interfere with her, she slipped into the nest, and in a short time came away again.

The man who was watching went over to the nest, and, sure enough, there was the egg of the cowbird. It looked quite like the sparrow's egg, a trifle larger, it is true, but not enough so for a sparrow to notice.

But if the sparrow did notice it, she might perhaps think that she was a little further ahead with her housekeeping than she had at first supposed. Perchance she might conclude that she had laid two eggs instead of merely one.

The mother cowbird seems to be quite liberal with her eggs. She does not seem to be at all partial, and distributes her eggs around most generously. She looks to see that they are put where they will very likely hatch, and as they do not require so long a time for this as most other birds' eggs, she is not at all likely to go amiss in her plans.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

It makes not so very much difference to her whose nest it may happen to be; the pendent nest of the oriole in some roadside elm suits her very well; or the nest of the indigo-bird does quite as nicely; or barring these, the nest of the chewink, thrush, or vireo—any of these, if they are within reach, are quite entirely to her taste. She is not at all fastidious about the matter; not in the least.



Well, as we were saying, here was the egg of the cowbird in the nest of the little song-sparrow. The man was very much tempted to throw the egg out, but as he liked to see how it would all turn out, he decided to leave it there for a while and watch results.

You see, it does not take the cowbird egg so long to hatch as those of the sparrow, and so it was the first egg in the nest to hatch. The young cowbird was larger than the other birds, and crowded them back and got most

## IMPOSING ON OTHERS

of the food. It did not seem to make any difference to him what sort of food was given to him so long as it was food; and the more he ate, the more he seemed to want. Whatever he ate seemed to act as an appetizer. His open, red mouth was forever clamoring for food; and the other little creatures, who really had the only right to the nest, were pushed and crowded almost out of the nest, and practically left to starve.

The man was quite disgusted by the selfishness of the greedy robber of a cowbird, and would have pitched him out of the nest forthwith, only that he wished to watch the affair a little longer, and thus see how bad things really could get.

Then something or another happened to keep the man from getting back to the nest as soon as he had expected; and when he did return, matters were in a sorry plight. The nest was practically filled by the cowbird. He had grown so large that he just about monopolized the whole nest. Although big and fat, he was still on the shout for something to eat.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Two of the young sparrows, or all there was left of them — merely their skeletons — were lying beside the bank, where they had been tumbled headlong. And one little, puny creature was jammed between the young cowbird and the edge of the nest.

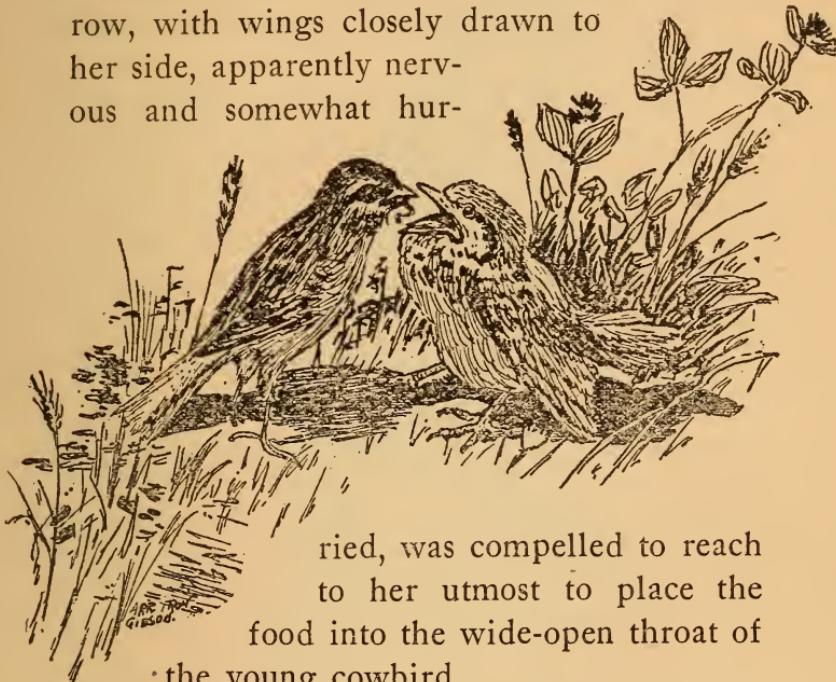
Although the young cowbird was not yet fully grown, he was already much larger than the mother sparrow. The man did not feel that it was his place to kill the little pirate, but there was one thing he could do, and it did not take him very long to set about it.

I have read of one man who found a young cowbird in a nest like this, and who took the young piece of imposition by the neck and dropped him in the river. But this man did not do that; he took the little pig of a cowbird from the nest, and set him on the ground beside the grassy bank. The young creature had so good a voice, and used it so effectively, that the man knew it would never die of starvation. And so the one little starved sparrow had the bed all to himself thereafter.

But it was somewhat amusing, as well as pathetic, to see the poor mother sparrow try

## IMPOSING ON OTHERS

to feed this big lubber of a cowbird. The little fellow would raise himself, shake his wings, and clamor for food; the mother sparrow, with wings closely drawn to her side, apparently nervous and somewhat hur-



ried, was compelled to reach to her utmost to place the food into the wide-open throat of the young cowbird.

I think it would have been better, and have saved the mother sparrow a great deal of hard work as well as the lives of two little ones, if the man had dropped that big egg out of the nest the first time he saw it. But one of the little sparrows was left to live, anyway;

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

and, of course, no one person can hope to straighten out all the bad tangles that come in this big world. If we can only keep from putting in some tangles of our own, it will be a great deal.

I am glad that there are some birds that will not allow the cowbird thus to impose upon them. For instance, the little Maryland yellowthroat, I am told, just dumps the old intruder's eggs right out of the nest and smash! onto the ground. You will often find broken cowbird's eggs under the nests of the oriole and the catbird. They simply will not endure such foolishness, and I do not blame them a particle, do you?

But if a bird were quite small and could not get the egg out of the nest, what would you suppose it could do? — I know what one bird does. One of the vireos promptly goes away and leaves the whole thing, and begins all over again.

But the yellow warbler seems to think it is too much trouble to find a new place for a nest; she seems to think she already has about as good a place as can be found; but she

## IMPOSING ON OTHERS

does not intend to be imposed upon by the cowbird, so she just builds a new nest right



over the old one, and thus leaves the old cowbird's egg down in the cellar, so to speak.

Mr. Gibson once found a nest which was really three nests, built one above the other,

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

with a spotted cowbird's egg in each of the two lower ones.

It is no wonder, then, that a bird which is up to so much mischief and causes so much trouble, should move about in the under-brush and bushes in the sly, sneaking way that is common to the cowbird.

THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS





## XII

### THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

Any one who watches the birds for a time will be surprised at the marks of their intelligence. They have difficulties to meet. And often they sit down, so to speak, and after having apparently thought it all over, attack the problem before them with vigor.

If at the first attempt they are not successful, they try again, and seek different expedients until they accomplish their purpose.

The young birds, as well, are taken through a course of instructions by their parents. Sometimes these young birds do not attend school with any better grace than some young folks I have known. But, with the birds, as with children, it is best for them, and they usually find it out.

A pair of wrens in the man's garden last summer had five little wrens to care for, and when the young birds left the nest, the noise in that garden was something immense.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

One of the parent birds would come near with its tempting morsel of food. The little wrens would stretch themselves out to the utmost, and chatter a perfect pandemonium of appeal, as if saying, "O, give it to me! O, give it to me!"

But it was the young bird that flew after the food that got it, no matter how much or how little he appealed. To the watcher it was clear enough that the parents were simply enticing the little creatures to use their wings, teaching them how to fly and alight.

The tiny creatures soon saw what was wanted, and before long there was a moving of wings back and forth across the garden, as the little ones chased the parents to secure the tempting food.

But no sooner was the lesson well learned than another task confronted the little upstarts. They were next enticed to the grape arbor, and taught to capture their own food. It was surprising to see how quickly they learned. In an amazingly short time they were flying in and out of the vines, seeking and devouring their prey.

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

Many incidents of a character similar to this schooling of the wrens have been recorded, and any one who will use his eyes for one summer will gather many others.

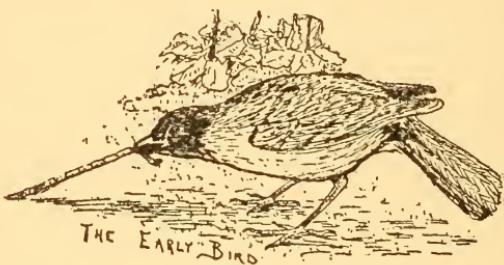
Olive Thorne Miller, in her wonderful little book, "Bird Ways," tells of the schooling of a number of birds. She has made a very close study of the birds, and has become versed in a large amount of valuable information concerning them.

For instance, she tells of a robin to which she was attracted by a furious calling. The bird was fluttering his wings and in evident trouble, though she could not at first imagine the cause. Looking more closely, she saw, perched on a cedar branch, a fat, stupid-looking bird, fully as big as the robin, with a speckled breast, and no tail worth mentioning.

He sat on the limb, looking like a lump of dough, his head well down in his shoulders, and his bill stretching almost straight up in the air. Neither the most tender appeals nor the loudest scoldings seemed to move him in the least. He looked, to all appearance, dead, save that he occasionally winked.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Stupid and stolid as he looked, the old bird loved him just the same, and fluttered about wildly while Mrs. Miller found a stick and jarred the branch a little as a delicate hint for the youngster to obey his papa. He accepted the well-meant advice, and flew away, as well as any bird, to the other side of the walk.



THE EARLY BIRD

And then began Master Robin's first lesson in the worm industry. He was now to be taught how to till the ground with profit and pleasure. The father bird hopped ahead a few feet and called persuasively, "Come on!" The slow-moving youngster answered loudly, "Wait! wait!" and moved forward a few steps.

Then the old bird dug up a worm just to show him how, and tenderly offered it to

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

him by way of encouragement. In this way they kept on for some time, the clumsy youngling led on by his greedy desire for worms, and the patient teacher, encouraging and working for him. If he ever thought of such a thing as making an effort for himself, it certainly was not manifest. And yet this is just what in time he would be left to learn or else starve.

And besides teaching the young birds how to fly and hunt food, they must also be given their lessons in music. In the early morning they have more than once been heard rehearsing a vocal lesson. Usually the old robin places himself in the thickest part of the tree, with his pupil near by, and begins, "Cheery! cheery! be cheery!" in a loud, clear voice. Then follows a feeble, wavering, uncertain attempt, on the part of the young bird, to copy the song. Again the father chants the first strain, and the baby pipes out his funny notes by way of imitation. This is kept up till in a surprisingly short time, with a good deal of practise, no one can tell father from son.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

A great many different kinds of birds have thus been seen to teach their young. Some-time you will perhaps see a young sparrow, squatted in a lump on a post or the roof of the shed, while his father or mother are coaxing him to another flight. If the crumb they offer the lazy youngster is not enough inducement, perhaps the little peck in the head he gets will be, and so, one way or the other, he ventures out into the seeming danger of thrusting himself headlong.

Not always do the bird children obey their parents, but I am glad to say that, as a general thing, they do. Once two old birds had a nest in a spruce tree. When the young were large enough to care for themselves, the old birds tried to get the young birds to go away. The old birds wanted the home for themselves. But the young birds did not care to go away. They loved the old home place.

First the mother bird tried to drive them away. She would bluster after them, flutter her wings, and scold loudly. Then she rushed at one of the youngsters, making as if to injure him severely; but when she came too near for



BROWN THRUSH, OR BROWN THRASHER



## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

comfort, it simply hopped to another branch, apparently quite unconcerned. Then she turned on another of the birds, with no better result.

Plainly, she was trying to teach them that they must seek a residence for themselves somewhere else, as she wanted that tree in which to bring up another family. But they knew that she still loved them, and did not seem to think she could really be very serious about it. Certainly their own mother did not intend to turn them out into the hard, cold world.

All the afternoon the sparrow mother worked at the task of disposing of the little family, but as soon as she had driven away one of them, another returned. At evening the young, trustful little creatures calmly placed themselves in the native spruce tree for the night.

The mother having failed so signally, in the morning the father took up the task. He acted as if he intended to make short work of the whole affair. He assumed his most warlike attitude, bristled up his feathers,

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

trailed his wings, with his back bent downward, and his tail erect. In this absurd attitude he went after them, calling, scolding, and making noise enough for a colony of birds.

Now and then he made a drive at one of the younglings, if perchance he came too near, but in the main he simply kept up a sort of bluster and a constant scolding. This sort of thing does not seem to make the young birds mind any better than it does children. Anyway, the youngsters did not seem to be frightened in the least, for they hopped about and ate and argued within arm's reach of their blustering father. If he rushed at one of them, it took refuge on the other side of the tree.

If he had really gone at them as he would have attacked an enemy, there is no doubt the matter would soon have been settled, but evidently he was somewhat proud of their pluck and perseverance, and had in his heart still an affectionate regard for them, which softened his own spirit, and made his efforts at discipline a failure.

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

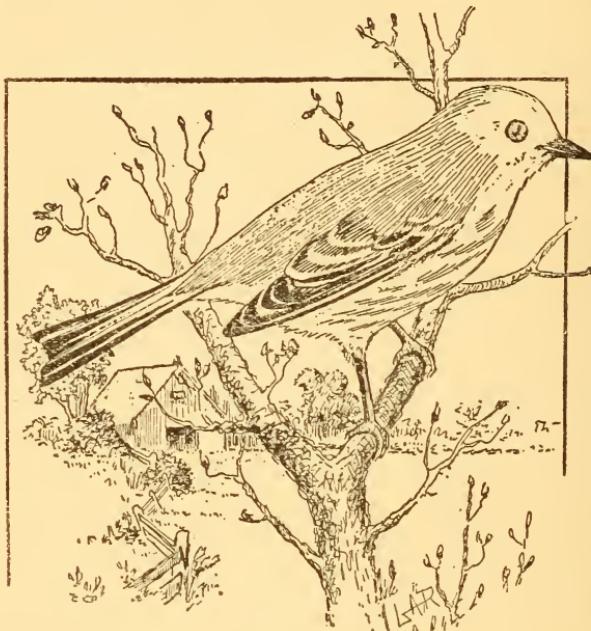
Nevertheless, he kept up his appearance of hostility. Occasionally he ran madly down a branch as if to annihilate somebody, but as no one was there, no one happened to get hurt. When an infant did take flight before him, he invariably stretched his neck to watch the flight, as if to see that the little one arrived in safety.

The mother aided the father to some extent. The young birds plainly knew what was wanted of them, but they did not seem willing to accept the fate offered to them. They did not usually "answer back," but when one did, the irate father went after him in a way that showed when he really meant business.

Near the close of the day it looked as if the father had been successful. He perched in a tree near by to shake himself out and plume his feathers. The young birds were gone, and he felt that he had done a good job. Just as he was congratulating himself on this happy ending, there sounded a flutter of wings, and back came the little fellows from around the corner of the house, and into the tree they went.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The old bird was plainly disconcerted. He stopped his toilet-making, and indulged in a



few remarks, expressed in some very harsh notes, and craned his neck to take it all in.

The next day four more young birds joined them, and now there were double the number of children in the old spruce. For nine

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

days the old birds kept up the attempt to drive the young birds away. But by that time the



old birds seemed willing to give it up, and went away to find a home elsewhere.

William J. Long, in his "Fowls of the

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Air," tells of an eagle and her nestling, which illustrates, not only a text in the Bible, but the fact we are attempting to present here; namely, that the young birds are taught by their elders.

He had found an eagle's nest in a tree many hundreds of feet up in the side of a mountain. One day when he came to visit the nest, he found one of the eaglets gone. The other stood on the edge of the nest, looking down fearfully into the deep abyss below, calling disconsolately the while. He seemed hungry and cross and lonesome.

Soon the mother eagle came swiftly up from the valley with food in her talons. Coming to the edge of the nest, she hovered over it a moment, so as to give the young eaglet a sight and a smell of the food she carried. He saw the food, and his appetite clamored for the morsel. Then the mother bird turned and went slowly down the valley, still holding the food, and, in this way, invited the young bird to follow her if he would have it.

The eaglet called after her loudly, and several times spread his wings as if to follow.

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

The plunge, however, was too forbidding; his heart failed him, and he settled back into the nest. Settling his head down into his



shoulders and shutting his eyes, he acted as if trying to forget the fact that he was hungry. The mother was seeking to teach him that the time had come for him to use his wings. But

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

he was afraid, and loved his nest. He hated to be stirred out of it.

Soon again came the mother, and this time without food. Again she hovered over the nest and sought to get the eaglet to leave. At last she succeeded, but the clumsy little fellow only sprang up and flapped from the nest to the side of the mountain, but a few feet away. Here he sat for a few moments and looked out upon the valley below. Then he flapped back into the nest once more, and paid no further attention to all his mother's assurance that he should fly farther and learn to be an eagle indeed.

It was pleasant to the eaglet to stay in the nest and be fed. But his mother knew there were greater possibilities for his eagle nature in learning to use his broad pinions and thus soar in the very realm of the clouds. But the little eagle was short-sighted, and was content to let well enough alone. He did not know that for him to have his own way would mean his ruination as an eagle.

Suddenly, as if grown desperate, the parent eagle rose well above the nest. It was a

## THE SCHOOL OF THE BIRDS

moment of suspense for the watcher, and he held his breath. The little fellow stood on the edge of the nest, looking down at the plunge which he dared not take. There was a sharp cry behind, which made him alert, tense as a watch-spring. The next instant the mother eagle had swooped, striking the nest at his feet, and had sent both nest and eaglet out into the air together.

He was out now into the broad expanse of the heavens itself, and he flapped wildly for life. But he was not alone; over him, under him, beside him, the mother hovered on trained and tireless wings, calling softly to him the while to calm his fearful spirit. And then, as if disconcerted by the lance tops of the spruces just below him, his flapping grew more wild. He fell faster and faster. Suddenly, perchance from fright, he lost his balance and tipped head downward in the air.

He seemed to realize that all was over now, and folded his wings to be dashed in pieces among the trees. But like a flash the mother eagle shot beneath him. His little feet touched her shoulders, between her wings.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

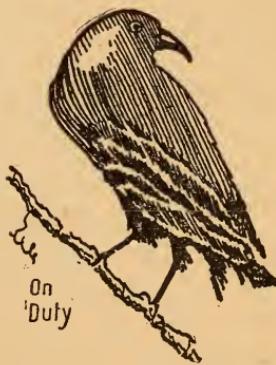
He clutched, righted himself, rested an instant, and found his head. In a moment more she dropped like a shot from under him, leaving him to try his wings and come down alone. A handful of feathers, torn out by his claws, drifted slowly down after them.



The two birds passed from sight among the trees. A little later, through his glass, the watcher saw the eaglet resting in the top of a great pine, and the mother was feeding him.

And then the watcher thought of the saying of the wise prophet who spoke in the ages now gone, and this man watching in the wilderness of America beheld what the man of the wilderness of the Midian desert had seen when he wrote: "As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord."

# BIRD-WAYS





## XIII

### BIRD-WAYS

But learning lessons is not confined to the young birds alone. The old birds, some of them rich in experience, are often confronted with perplexing problems, to solve which requires all the powers of their tiny brains.

It is indeed interesting to see how they watch and study, seeking out ways and means by which to succeed in their desires.

We have already given you the story of how the sparrows, by the example of the bluebirds, learned to enter a box which before that seemed utterly beyond their powers. They had another house, only a step away from it, which had a perch before the door, and which they might easily have made use of. But they had taken a notion to get into the bluebirds' box instead, and they never gave it up until it was at last done, and done pretty well for sparrows.

In the fall a number, at least two, made

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

their home there for a time, and were seen to come and go with ease, making the bluebirds' home their own in the fullest sense of the word. And this spring they are there again, happy and contented. Thus you observe that they studied a hard problem and fully mastered it.

The story of the cat who learned how to catch birds further shows that the creatures of nature learn how to do what they really set about doing. They have situations to confront as difficult and perplexing to them as any that face humanity.

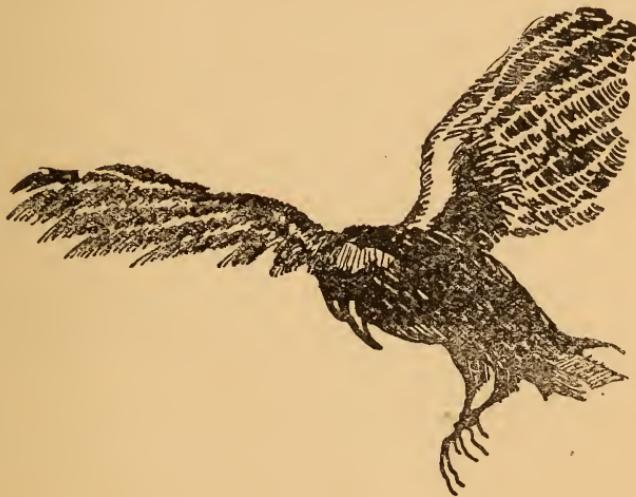
A great many farmers know how wise the crow is. If you give a crow a piece of dry bread, as likely as not he will soak it in water first, provided there is some handy, and thus take his bread soft. He knows a thing or two, and, if you get acquainted with him, you will find it out.

And while we speak of crows, let me tell you of some things observed and recorded by persons whose word you can rely upon.

Dr. Abbott one day was wandering in a gully, watching the robins, when he saw a

## BIRD-WAYS

crow solve a peculiar problem. There was something, nobody knows what, that the crow discovered away up in a tall tree. He wanted it, but could not reach it. He climbed above, below and around it, but all to no purpose.



Dr. Abbott concluded that the crow would have to give it up as a bad job, but the crow was of a different opinion. Having been baffled in every other way, the bird took a short outward flight, turned, and, resting in the air on extended wing, after the fashion of a humming-bird, it secured the coveted mor-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

sel. Then it sought a near-by perch, held the object, which was of the size of a hen's egg, in its beak a moment, and swallowed it. Having done what it set out to do, it chuckled to itself in a meaning way and took flight.

Again he saw a number of crows fishing mussels from the Delaware River. They ran along the edge of the sand-bars, which were exposed at low tide. Every few moments one of them would rise to a height of fully fifty-feet, carrying a mussel in its beak, and flying inland to a distance of one hundred yards, would let the mollusk fall on the meadow. As a general thing, the force of the fall was enough to break the shell.

But the crows did not stop to eat them, O no. They immediately returned to the islands and bars and gathered more mussels. This they continued until the rising tide stopped their work. They showed some intelligence in carrying these shells up in the air, and dropping them in such a way as to break them and open up the contents; but they showed far more wisdom in not stopping to eat so long as they could gather more shell-fish. It

## BIRD-WAYS

seems indeed marvelous that these crows understood the fact of the soon-rising tide, and realizing that their time was short, made the best use of it that they could. Then when the returning waters made further fishing impracticable, they hastened to their feast, enjoying the results of their intelligent labor.

A baby crow once did not come when his parents called him. The other young crows flew, but he kept still, and did not seem to think he would be noticed.

But a crow has sharp eyes, and the mother crow saw how he was doing. When she came back, therefore, she flew directly at the disobedient young crow and knocked him clear off his perch. After that when she called, he followed with the rest.

The meadow-lark has a black crescent on its breast which is very conspicuous. The bird seems to know this, and when an enemy comes near, turns its brownish back in that direction, for the lark is hard to be seen against the brown of the earth and the trees.

Once a lark found himself in a difficult place. He was on a fence, and on one side

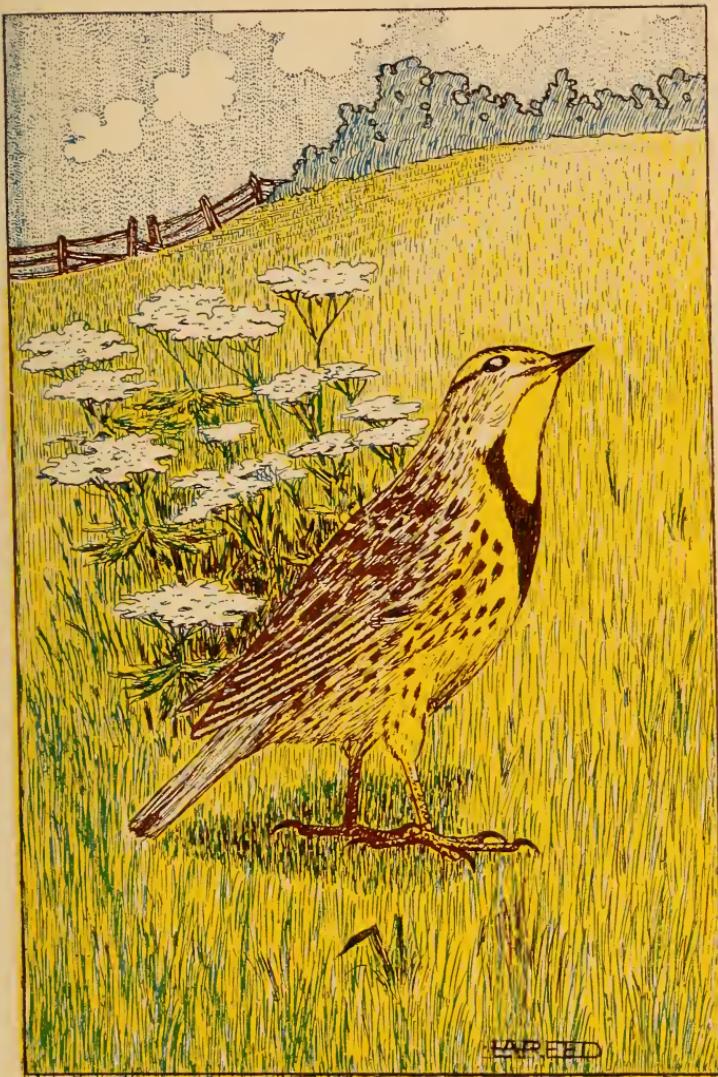
## BIRD-WAYS

was a hawk, searching for him, and on the other side a collector, also hunting for birds. Toward which of these should the lark expose his brilliant yellow breast with its black crescent? To be seen by either one of them would probably mean death.

The collector had more than once seen larks in this field who turned their backs on him when he came near, so that he might not see them. But this lark seemed to know that it would be safer to trust the man than the hawk, and so it turned its back on the hawk, and stood facing the man.

No good man would take advantage of a bird that showed such trust as that, and I am glad to say that this man spared the lark, and let him live to sing on for many a day.

I have heard of another incident which shows that the birds will trust man in preference to their other enemies. They have learned that many people are kind-hearted, but it is often difficult for them to know whom to trust. If you once gain their confidence, their trust and affection is something beautiful and pleasing.



MEADOW LARK



## BIRD-WAYS

Dr. Wheaton was one time out walking. A lark-sparrow flew ahead of him, and led him to a garter snake. The lark circled about the snake several times as if pointing it out. The doctor at once killed the snake, and the bird immediately perched on a fence stake and sang out his abundant gratitude.

But its thankfulness was suddenly turned to sorrow when the poor sparrow discovered that the doctor, all unknowingly, had thrown the dead snake almost into the nest. The poor bird tugged and dragged at the body quite in vain, till the doctor came again to its assistance, and tossed the snake out of sight. This done, the bird once more burst into thankful song.

It takes a quiet, patient love to teach birds or other creatures that they need have no fear of you. They have had many reasons in their brief lives for being mistrustful of humanity. But they have wonderful knowledge for such tiny things, and can be taught in time, if one is never boisterous, rude, or nervous while in their presence. Quick movements are especially to be avoided.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

My oldest brother visited me one summer, and was greatly interested in the gray squirrels that frequented the city square. They had been worried considerably by vicious dogs, and some of the squirrels had been killed. As a consequence the young creatures were not very trustful of anybody or anything.

But my brother had a wonderful interest in them, and went out several times every day to feed and talk to the bright little furry creatures. It was not long before one of the squirrels came to know him from all the hundreds that passed through and about the square.

When my brother would arrive at the park, this squirrel would come to him at once. He would nose about in my brother's partly closed fist, and fish for the peanuts that were there. He would crawl into his pockets, climb up onto his shoulders and head, and crawl down his arm to take a nut from his hand.

No one else could do this, for many tried, only to see the squirrel run from them. The little creature would tolerate no familiarities from any one else. He had his preference, and there was the end of it.





## BIRD-WAYS

There are many cases on record where birds have duped and deceived people, and then seemingly shown how keenly they relished the joke.



KINGBIRD.

More than once have I seen a blue jay make fun for himself and his fellows by blustering and frightening English sparrows.

Birds also plainly display pride and self-confidence now and then, and again they are helpful and obliging, not only to their own family, but to others as well.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

They grow angry over encroachments upon their rights, and they can become incensed and go to war for the justice they deserve.

Some birds, as the jays and the kingbirds, can bully and bluster the smaller birds. And some, even of the tiny birds, can show a bravery that is impressive and praiseworthy.

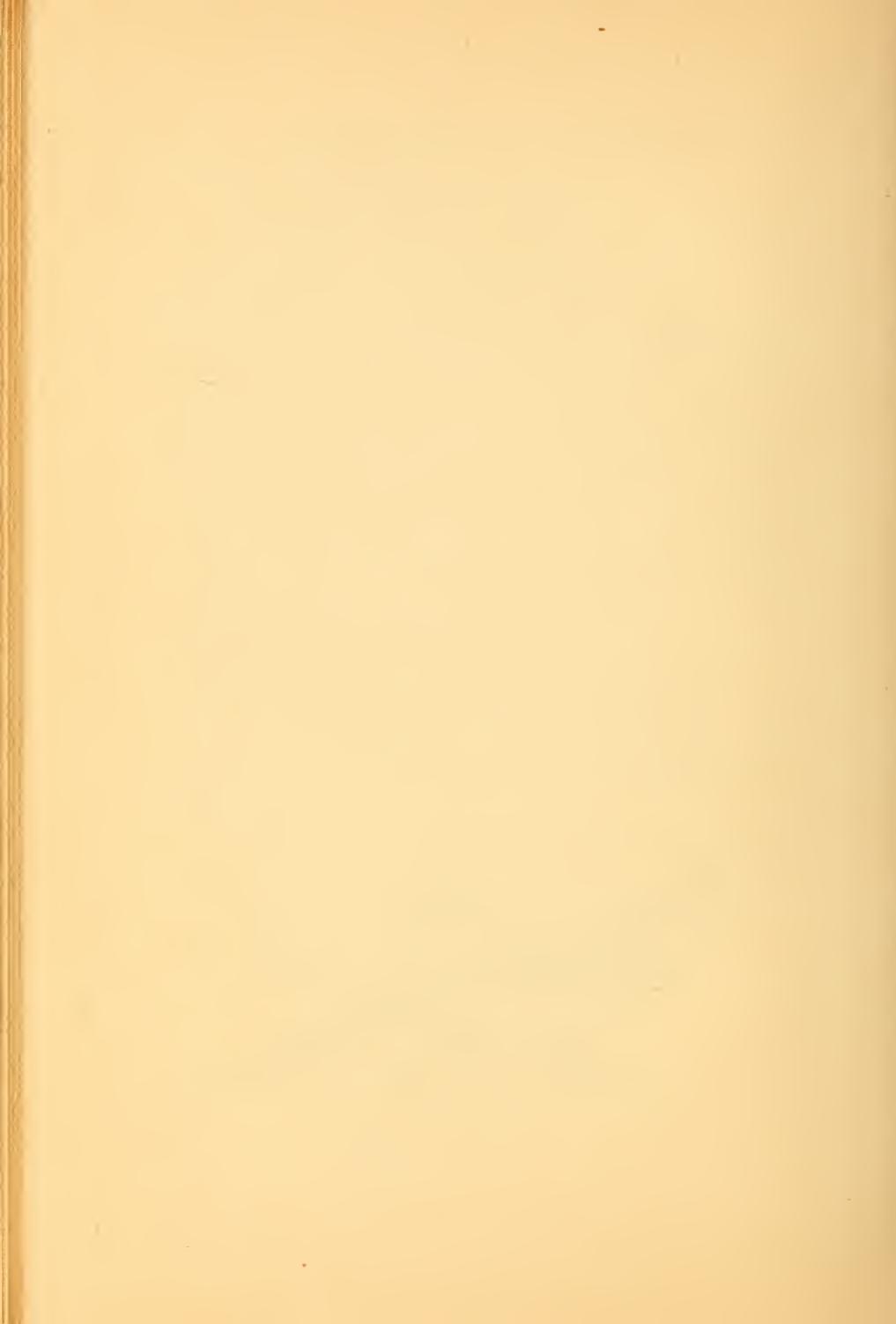
Some birds are practically faultless in conduct, as the bluebird; while some other birds, as the English sparrow, can be regular rowdies, and even murderers, without serious provocation.

Man has made nature a good deal like himself. In the study of nature, therefore, he sees reflected much of what he himself is or may be, both as to the upward and the downward tendencies of life.

Nature, consequently, is an impressive teacher.

# INVITATIONS TO THE BIRDS





## XIV

### INVITATIONS TO THE BIRDS

Do you love the birds? Do you wish them for your neighbors? Even if you live in a tenement you may delight in the companionship of the birds. And if you live in the country, a little effort, rightly directed, will give you the happy companionship of hundreds of the best and most helpful birds.

Every spring they come North by the hundreds, and they are all on the lookout for homes. They are more discriminating than we recognize. They know whether our door-yards give them a welcome or not.

They soon know and seek the places where there is no gunning. And they will not stay long where air-rifles and sling-shots do deadly execution.

And it may as well be understood at the outset that we must choose between cats and the birds. The cat holds the foremost place as a destroyer of song-birds. It has been esti-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

mated that each cat is responsible, on the average, for the death of about fifty song-birds a year. The cat mentioned in one of the chapters of this book was capable of destroying about twenty a week.

If cats and red squirrels are banished from your place, you will be surprised at the rapid increase in the number of song-birds. The rats and mice can be destroyed easily by means of traps or poisons.

English sparrows should be discouraged as much as possible, as they take up the nesting places of much better birds.

And, thus, you see, the first thing necessary in inviting the birds is to protect them from their enemies. The next thing is to provide them with suitable nesting places.

Birds love tangles of bushes and shrubs; hence by planting a corner of the yard with sunflowers and wild berry bushes, we supply them with places for home, for hiding, and in which to find food.

A vessel of water, kept always full, and safe from their enemies, is also a great attraction to the birds, and gives them a place



WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

where they may drink and bathe. Place a stone in it and furnish the birds a place to stand upon.

Martins, wrens, bluebirds, and chickadees occupy artificial nesting places. For such we can supply gourds, cans, and boxes. Bird-houses may be built, at once useful and ornamental.

In the winter you can attract the birds by nailing a piece of suet or fat pork to a tree or post. Last winter we enjoyed very much seeing the birds feed upon a piece of suet which we kept nailed to a standard of the grape arbor. It sometimes looked as if the blue jay would drive his bill clear through the piece of fat, so eager did he seem for his portion of the delicacy.

A window shelf, protected by an awning, is a fine place on which to scatter grain or crumbs. The birds may be fed hemp seed, sunflower seed, nuts, cracked corn, and bread made two-thirds of corn-meal and one-third of wheat flour.

And now a word as to the things to plant. The orioles love mulberries, and you should

## INVITATIONS TO THE BIRDS

have at least one tree on the place. Many other birds will feed on the mulberries, and thus you will keep them away from your fruit trees to a large extent.

Many farmers are planting mulberry trees, the shadbush, or June-berry, in order to protect their strawberry beds, the first of which ripen about the same time.

Then there is the choke-cherry, another enticing tree for birds. Let a few poke-weeds grow. The birds will eat the berries, and the weeds will do no harm, as they are easily controlled. If you have a corner that you can spare for the elder, you will find its showy black berries very useful in furnishing food for the birds.

It is not necessary to go over the list of shrubs and trees that furnish fruit to the birds. In every locality there are native fruits, and a little observation will teach you which ones are preferred by the birds about you. Such will be the fruits for you to plant and cultivate.

But whatever you do, plant those that will ripen at intervals throughout the sum-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

mer, thus furnishing the birds with a constant supply of food.

Do not forget to provide nesting places, water, food, and protection from enemies. This done, you will have plenty of bird neighbors, and they will furnish you with endless delight and much useful knowledge.

## XV

### INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

By observing their color markings, their habits, and their notes, you may become acquainted with all the birds in your neighborhood.

Do not trust your memory, but have a notebook, and put down accurately only what you see.

In getting the markings of birds that will not allow a close approach, an opera-glass will be of great assistance.

Furthermore, be scrupulously conscientious about all your observations, and cultivate unlimited patience and perseverance.

You will not find many birds in the deep woods; but in shrubby dooryards, along shaded avenues, in orchards, pastures, and along streams of water, you will find them in plenty.

Keep the sun over your shoulder, as you can not distinguish colors against the light.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Move deliberately and quietly. Birds have so many enemies they are easily frightened.

In the winter and early spring is a good time to begin making the acquaintance of the birds, since they are less numerous and confusing at these times. Once you are acquainted with the winter birds, you have a foundation of safe knowledge upon which to build, and progress after that will be delightful and continuous.

If you are observing birds in winter, choose the warmest, most quiet part of the day. Usually eleven o'clock is a good hour.

In summer, early morning and toward sunset are the best times for observation, the few hours after daybreak being the very best of all.

One of the finest places I ever found for studying birds was in an old orchard by the riverside. Here, seated in the shade of the trees, we could see dozens of birds and note their many characteristics. In an ordinary dooryard one will be surprised to note how many and various the birds that congregate, and how much there is to learn about them.

## TO FIND THE NAME OF A GIVEN BIRD

After noting carefully the marks and characteristics, turn to the Color Guide. By means of the Guide you will doubtless find your bird to be one of several. Turn next to the descriptions of these birds, and you should easily determine its name; provided, of course, it is given in this book. We have presented here only the more common birds, as it would take a large book devoted to nothing else to present them all. There are a number of such books already on the market.

If now you think you have determined the name of the bird, turn to the index of illustrations and find a picture of it. This may further help you in the matter.

### COLOR GUIDE

- A. Birds marked conspicuously with *blue*.
- B. Birds marked conspicuously with *red*.
- C. Birds marked conspicuously with *yellow* or *orange*.
- D. Birds marked conspicuously with *black* or *white*.
- E. Birds marked conspicuously with *olive-green* or *olive-brown*.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

- F. Birds marked conspicuously with *gray* or *bluish*.
- G. Birds marked conspicuously with *brown* or *brownish*.
- A. Marked conspicuously with *blue*.
  - 1. Large; head with crest: Belted Kingfisher, Blue Jay.
  - 2. Small; head not crested.
    - a. Body wholly blue or blue-black: Purple Martin, Indigo Bird.
    - b. Body not wholly blue or blue-black: Barn Swallow, Bluebird, Tree Swallow.
- B. Marked conspicuously with *red*.
  - 1. Body green or greenish: Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-throated Humming-bird.
  - 2. Body mainly red: Crossbill, Cardinal, Tanagers, Pine Grosbeak.
  - 3. General color black or black and white: Red-winged Blackbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Redstart, Yellow-bellied Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker.
- C. Marked conspicuously with *yellow* or *orange*.
  - 1. Head, throat, and most of back black: Baltimore Oriole, Redstart.
  - 2. Whole head not black: Maryland Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Dickcissel, Goldfinch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-bellied Woodpecker, Flicker, Meadow-lark.
- D. Marked conspicuously with *black* or *black* and *white*.
  - 1. Mainly black or black and white: The Blackbirds, Cowbird, Bobolink, Red-breasted Grosbeak, Chewink, Redstart, Black and White Warbler, Snowflake.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

2. Not wholly black and white: Baltimore Oriole, Goldfinch, Maryland Yellowthroat, Yellow-bellied Woodpecker, Meadow-lark, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole, Blue Jay.
- E. Marked conspicuously with *olive-green* or *olive-brown*.  
Under parts spotted: Ovenbird, Kinglets, Red-eyed Vireo.



- F. Marked conspicuously with *gray* or *bluish gray*.
  1. Plumage distinctly marked with black: Chickadees, the Nuthatches, Shrike, Catbird.
  2. Plumage not distinctly marked with black: Junco, Mocking-bird.
- G. Marked conspicuously with *brown* or *brownish*: Flicker, Mourning Dove, Pigeon, Cuckoos, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Chimney Swift, Waxwing, Kingbird, Flycatchers, Swallows, Brown Creeper, Finches, Sparrows, Thrushes, Wrens.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

The finches and sparrows have conical bills for cracking seeds; they are mostly ground and bush-hunting birds.

The thrushes are relatively larger; the upper parts are not barred or streaked, and the under parts are spotted.

The wrens are relatively small; upper parts barred or streaked; breasts not spotted.

### SPECIAL DESCRIPTIONS

#### BLUEBIRD

*Length.*—Seven inches.

Upper parts clear bright blue.

Throat and breast reddish earth color.

*Range.*—Eastern United States and Southern Canada; winters from southern Illinois and southern New York southward.

#### ROBIN

*Length.*—Ten inches.

Upper parts slate color, with a tinge of brown.

Head black on top and sides, white spots around the eyes.

Tail black, white spots on tips of some feathers.

Under parts brick red, except streaked with black and white on throat and under tail.

*Range.*—United States and Canada.

#### WESTERN ROBIN

This bird lives in California and neighborhood, is a little lighter in color, practically the same otherwise as our common robin.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

### WOOD-THRUSH

*Length.*— Eight inches.

Upper parts color ground cinnamon, brightest on head, light greenish on the tail.

Under parts plain white in middle, plainly spotted with black over the breast and along sides.

Eye-ring whitish.

*Range.*— United States. It winters in Central America.

### WILSON'S THRUSH OR VEERY

*Length.*— Seven and one-half inches.

Upper parts similar to Wood-Thrush, but not so bright on head, and not a particle greenish on tail. Breast and throat deep cream color, finely speckled with brown on upper part.

Belly white. No white ring around eye.

*Range.*— Eastern Canada and United States to Northern Illinois and northern New Jersey, southward along the Alleghanies to North Carolina. Winters in Central America.

### HERMIT THRUSH

*Length.*— Seven inches.

Upper parts olive brown, except rich reddish-brown on tail.

Throat and breast light buff with chains of black spots.

Belly white. Yellowish ring around eye.

*Range.*— Nests from Vermont to Northern Michigan, in the higher portions of Massachusetts, and on crests of Catskills and Alleghanies. Winters from Southern Illinois and New Jersey southward to the Gulf.

*Habits.*— Has characteristic habit of gently raising and lowering the tail and at same time uttering

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

low "chuck." Song similar to that of Wood-Thrush, but more tender and serene, sounding something like, "O spheral, O spheral! O holy, holy!"

### OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH

*Length.*— Seven inches,— same as Hermit.

Upper parts even olive color all over.

Under parts cream-yellowish, whiter on belly.

Throat and breast spotted with black.

A yellowish eye-ring like creamy color of breast.

*Range.*— Eastern Canada and Northern New England. In the Rocky Mountains, and along Alleghanies to Pennsylvania. Winters in tropics.

### BROWN CREEPER

*Length.*— Five and a half inches.

Upper parts brown, white, and buff; plain brown tail; light buff band on wings.

Under parts white.

Bill very sharp and slender, curved like surgeon's needle.

*Range.*— Eastern North America. Winters from Canada to Gulf States.

*Habits.*— Found on tree trunks, seemingly always busy. Does not usually turn head downward like nuthatch.

### CHICKADEE

*Length.*— Five inches.

Upper parts ashy gray; head, back of neck, and throat, shiny black; cheeks pure white.

Middle of breast white; sides and belly, buff.

*Range.*— Eastern North America, and nests from southern Illinois and Pennsylvania northward to

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

Labrador, and along the Alleghanies to North Carolina.

### WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

*Length.*— Six inches.

Upper parts grayish-blue.

Black on top of head and top of neck, and some black and white marks on wings and tail. Sides of face and whole of breast white, rusty on belly. Bill strong, straight, sharp-pointed, two-thirds inch long.

*Range.*— Eastern North America.

### RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH

*Length.*— Four and a half inches.

Upper parts bluish-gray. Top of head and wide stripe through eye to nape shiny black.

White line over eye.

Throat white, rest of under parts reddish-brown.

*Range.*— North America. Winters in Southern States.

### KINGLETS

*Length.*— Four inches.

Upper parts olive-green.

### RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

Crown with partly concealed crest of bright red.

Two whitish wing bars.

### GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET

Center of crown bright reddish-orange, bordered by yellow and black.

Upper parts of both birds soiled whitish.

*Range.*— North America. Winters in southern part of United States.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### CATBIRD

*Length.*— Eight or nine inches.

Upper parts of slate color. Crown, bill, feet, tail, black.

Under parts of lighter grayish-slate, except chestnut-red spot under the tail.

*Range.*— North America. Winters from Florida southward.

*Habits.*— Also great singer and imitator, but not so great as mocking-bird. Has a number of cat-like notes and movements.

### MOCKING-BIRD

*Length.*— Ten inches.

Upper parts gray; wings dusky brownish, each with large white spot; tail blackish with three white feathers on each side.

Under parts whitish.

*Range.*— Southern United States, sometimes straying as far north as New England. Winters from Virginia southward.

*Habits.*— Great singer; has many comic songs, but sings his true song, which is a rapid, sweet melody, and is usually heard best after twilight. Has been known to imitate notes of no less than thirty-two different species of birds during ten minutes of continuous singing.

### SAGE THRASHER

*Length.*— Eight inches.

Upper parts gray, tinged with brown.

Under parts white, shading to buff; breast thickly spotted with very dark brown.

Two white bands on wings; white spots on end of tail.

*Range.*— Western United States.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

### BROWN THRASHER

(Sometimes called Brown Thrush)

*Length.*—Eleven inches.

Upper parts bright reddish-brown, two light bands on wings.

Under parts yellowish-white; breasts and sides spotted with very dark brown.

Very long tail, about five inches, fan-shaped.

Is easily distinguished from the thrushes by this long tail.

*Range.*—Eastern North America; winters from Virginia southward.

*Habits.*—As great a singer as the mocking-bird and the catbird, but no imitator. Often found on the ground.

### ROCK WREN

*Length.*—About six inches.

Back of gray, with fine black and white dots.

Under parts of no special color. Part of tail feathers with black bars and cinnamon brown tips.

*Range.*—United States from Rocky Mountains to Pacific Ocean.

*Habits.*—Has a rich, ringing song, somewhat like the house wren's, but louder, stronger, and quicker.

Often found about rocks, nesting there, and hiding among them when frightened.

### LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN

*Length.*—Five inches.

Upper parts clear brown, long light line over the eye, black and white streaks on back; tail and wings marked with light and dark brown bars.

Under parts white, tinged with brown on sides.

Long, slender bill, longer than the house wren's.

Song more bubbling and gurgling than the house wren's.

*Range.*—Eastern United States.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### HOUSE WREN

*Length.*— Five inches.

Upper parts of dark brown finely barred with black.  
Under parts of gray, sides with numerous blackish bars.

Tail comparatively long for a wren, usually held cocked up; wings and tail finely barred.

*Range.*— Eastern United States. Winters in Southern States.

*Habits.*— A fidgety little bird, given to scolding when imposed upon, having a merry song, the energy of whose outpouring causes his whole body to vibrate.

*Note.*— There is a Western house wren slightly different from the above.

### WINTER WREN

*Length.*— Four inches.

Upper parts dark cinnamon brown; wings and tail barred.

Under parts marked with pale cinnamon brown.

Lower breast, sides, and belly somewhat heavily barred with black.

*Range.*— Eastern North America; winters from Massachusetts and Illinois to Florida.

### MARYLAND YELLOWTHROAT

*Length.*— Five and a half inches.

Upper parts olive-green, sometimes tinged with yellowish; male has black mask reaching across forehead, and on cheeks and ear-coverts; behind this an ashy white border; female has no black mask.

Under parts bright yellow, changing to white on belly.

*Range.*— Whole United States from Gulf States northward.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

*Note.*—West of Mississippi River he is called Western Yellowthroat.

*Characteristics.*—A beautiful and familiar bird of thickets and bushes. He is quite willing to meet you half way. Announces his coming by a quick repeated *chack, chit, pit, or quit*, as he hops from twig to twig, to quickly disappear again.

Song sometimes given as *Witchity, witchity, witchity*; or possibly *I beseech you, I beseech you, I beseech you*; or perhaps *I spy it, I spy it, I spy it*. Sings all summer.

### YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

*Length.*—Seven and a half inches.

Upper parts evenly colored bright olive-green.

Lower parts very bright yellow on throat, breast, and upper belly. Lower belly pure white, sides grayish. White eye-ring, and white line from eye to bill, and one on each side of throat.

*Range.*—Eastern United States from Minnesota to Massachusetts, and southward. Winters in Central America.

*Note.*—West of the plains his tail is longer, and he is there called Long-tailed Chat. He is the largest of the warblers.

*Characteristics.*—A bird with an air of mystery, peculiar and eccentric. Has an odd jumble of whistles, chucks, and caws, apparently produced by different birds; hence is something of a ventriloquist; also utters the peculiar note which gives him the name of Chat.

### AMERICAN REDSTART

*Length.*—Five and a half inches.

Upper parts shining black, marked on wings and tail with rich salmon-red.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Under parts shining black on neck and breast. Sides bright salmon-red. Belly white, tinged with salmon. In the female, all the parts which are black in the male are bright greenish-gray, and she has clear yellow where he is red.

*Range*.—North America. Winters in the tropics.

*Characteristics*.—In Cuba this bird, on account of his bright plumage, is called Candelita, for he is the little torch that flashes through the gloomy depths of their heavy forests. Sings *Ching, ching, chee; ser-mee, smee, smee-e-e*. Darts about with wings and tail outspread, catching gnats and caterpillars.

Sometimes called Dancing Warbler.

### BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

*Length*.—Five inches.

Upper parts striped all over with black and white.  
Under parts striped on sides, white in middle.

*Range*.—Eastern United States. Winters from Florida southward.

*Characteristics*.—A weak, wheezy voice. From its habit of scrambling about tree-trunks and branches, it may be mistaken for a brown creeper, or a nuthatch, or possibly a woodpecker.

### YELLOW WARBLER

(Summer Yellowbird)

*Length*.—Five inches.

Upper parts rich greenish-yellow, brighter on the crown; dark brown on wings and tail, inside half of each tail feather yellow, wings edged with yellow.

Under parts bright yellow, male bird streaked beneath with rich brownish-red.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

*Note*.— Sometimes called wild canary, a name also sometimes applied to the Yellowbird, or American Goldfinch, which see.

*Characteristics*.— An active bird with song that sounds like *wee-chee, chee, chee, chee-wee*.

### YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

(Myrtlebird)

*Length*.— Five and a half inches.

Upper parts dark gray, streaked with black.

Two white bars on each wing; large white spots on some of the tail feathers. *A patch of yellow on the rump and crown.*

Under parts white, breast and sides streaked with black. Each side of breast marked by a patch of yellow.

*Range*.— Northern United States and northward, more common in East than West. Winters from southern New England to Panama.

### OVENBIRD

(Golden-Crowned Thrush)

*Length*.— Six inches.

Upper parts brownish olive-green, a rusty-yellow streak between two black lines on the crown.

Lower parts white, breast and sides with black streaks.

*Range*.— West to Kansas and north to Alaska. Winters far South.

*Characteristics*.— Has a sharp, weak note, sounding like *cheap*. Song described by Mr. Burrough as Teacher, Teacher, TEACHER, TEACHER, TEACHER.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### RED-EYED VIREO

*Length.*— Six inches.

Upper parts light olive green, white line over eye, and has gray cap with black border. No wing bars.

Under parts white, shaded with greenish on sides.

*Note.*— This bird is best distinguished by its slatey-gray cap bordered with a black line.

*Range.*— Eastern North America westward to British Columbia. Winters in Central and South America.

*Characteristics.*— Found about trees. Called vireo from a Latin word meaning "green." His style of song has earned for him the name of the "Preacher." A relative, called the White-eyed Vireo, for a similar reason is called the "Politician."

The Red-eye sings during the heat of our long summer days, when most birds are quiet.

### LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

This bird is very similar to the preceding, both in appearance and habits, but may be found in summer in Eastern North America west to the edge of the plains. It is distinguished from the northern shrike by being over an inch shorter, by a narrow black line on the forehead at base of bill, and by having the line from the bill to the eye black, while in preceding bird it is grayish-black.

### GREAT NORTHERN SHRIKE

*Length.*— Ten inches.

Upper parts bluish-gray. A broad black stripe along the side of the head reaching back of the eye. Wings black with large white spot on each.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

Tail black, tipped with white on outside feathers.  
Bill hooked and hawklike.

Under parts grayish-white, finely barred with black.  
*Range*.—Found in United States only in winter.  
Spends its summer far North.

*Characteristics*.—Preys on mice, noxious insects, and English sparrows, often impaling them on thorns, barbed fences, and forked twigs.

### CEDAR WAXWING (Cedar Bird or Cherry Bird)

*Length*.—Seven inches.

Upper parts rich grayish-brown, very smooth and satiny. A long fine-pointed crest; forehead, chin, and a line through eye velvety black. Yellow band across end of tail. Inner wing feathers with small, red, seed-shaped, sealing-wax-like tips, from which it takes the name of Waxwing.

*Range*.—North America. Winters from Northern United States to Central America.

*Characteristics*.—Especially known for the gentleness and refined manner in which they treat one another. Called the most polite birds in creation. Especially given to passing dainty morsels of food to his next-door neighbor. In spite of what may be said to the contrary, this bird eats very few cherries when he has access to wild berries, which he much prefers.

### BANK SWALLOW

*Length*.—Five inches.

Upper parts dusty brown, darker on wings. Tail slightly forked.

Under parts white, a brown band across breast.

*Range*.—North America north to Labrador and Alaska. Winters as far south as Brazil.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

*Characteristics.*—Builds its nest in a hole in a sand-bank. Its song has been likened to a little girl's giggle.

*Note.*—It may be distinguished from other swallows by its nesting habits, small size, and absence of metallic coloring.

The rough-winged swallow is very similar to the bank swallow, both in habits and appearance ; but, unlike the bank swallow, it sometimes nests about bridges, railway trestles, and their abutments.

It may be distinguished from the bank swallow by its plain, pale brownish-gray, evenly colored throat and breast, and by its somewhat slower, less erratic movements.

### TREE SWALLOW

*Length.*—Six inches.

Upper parts steel-blue or steel-green ; wings and tail darker. Tail slightly forked.

Under parts pure white.

*Range.*—North America north to Labrador and Alaska. Winters from South Carolina southward.

*Characteristics.*—Nests in hollows of dead trees, old holes of woodpeckers, sometimes in bird boxes.

*Note.*—Distinguished from other swallows by its pure-white breast and throat.

### BARN SWALLOW

*Length.*—Six to seven inches.

Upper parts shining steel-blue ; face buff color.

Under parts buff ; throat brick-red with steel-blue collar.

Tail very long and deeply forked, with side feathers narrow and spotted with white.

*Range.*—North America, north to Greenland and Alaska ; winters as far south as southern Brazil.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

*Characteristics.*—Builds a nest of mud and straw on a beam in the hayloft. Has a sweet call-note and happy twittering song. It consumes a vast number of winged insects.

### PURPLE MARTIN

*Length.*—Seven and a half inches.

Upper parts shining blue-black; wings and forked tail duller.

Under parts same as upper in male, but grayish-white in female and young birds.

*Range.*—North America, north to Newfoundland and Saskatchewan; winters in Central and South America.

*Characteristics.*—Song rich and musical, flute-like, of two or three notes. Quite common in South, but decreasing in numbers in North. The English sparrow is one of its greatest enemies, driving it from its nesting boxes and attacking the young birds.

### SCARLET TANAGER

*Length.*—Seven inches.

*Male.*—Bright scarlet with black wings and tail.

*Female.*—Light olive-green above, dull yellow below; dusky wings and tail.

*Range.*—Eastern North America. Winters in Central northern South America.

*Characteristics.*—This is the brightest-red bird you will find in Eastern North America. Its song suggests the song of the robin.

### SUMMER TANAGER

*Length.*—Same.

This bird breeds farther south than does the scarlet tanager. The male has grayish-brown wings mar-

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

gined with rose-red, and the under parts of the females are yellowish-orange. It may also be easily identified by its characteristic call-note — a clearly enunciated *Chicksy-tucksy-tuck*.

### LOUISIANA TANAGER

*Length.*— About seven inches.

*Male.*— Rich yellow; black wings, tail, and middle of back; the head entirely crimson.

*Female.*— Very similar to female scarlet tanager.

*Range.*— Western United States.

*Note.*— First discovered by Lewis and Clark in what is now Idaho, near the Oregon border, and named the Louisiana Tanager by Alexander Wilson in honor of the Louisiana Purchase.

### AMERICAN CROSSBILL

*Length.*— Six inches.

*Male.*— General color dull red with dark wings and tail.

*Female.*— General color dull olive-green, wings and tail similar to male.

*Range.*— Northward from Northern United States. Sometimes travels as far south as the Gulf in winter.

*Note.*— Beak somewhat like a parrot's, except that points cross near tips.

### PINE GROSBEAK

*Length.*— Nine inches.

*Adult male.*— Mostly strawberry red in color, wings and tail dark, with white edging. Tail slightly forked.

*Female and Young Male.*— General color gray, tinged here and there with saffron yellow.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

*Range*.— Northern half of North America, occasionally seen in northern United States in winter.

### AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

(Yellowbird, Thistlebird, Jollybird)

*Length*.— Five inches.

*Male in Summer*.— Bright, clear yellow head, with black cap, wings, and tail black with some white.

*Female and Male in Winter*.— Upper parts grayish-brown, with tinge of olive, wings and tail as above, less distinctly marked with white, no black cap.

*Range*.— Temperate North America. Winters from northern United States to Gulf.

*Characteristics*.— Song somewhat like canary, but more wild and ringing. Flies in many curves, singing *Per-chick-o-ree* on downward curves.

### THE SNOWFLAKE

*Length*.— Seven inches.

*In Summer*.— Snow-white; black on back, wings, and tail.

*In Winter*.— Upper parts a rusty brown, black stripes on back; under parts white, rusty marks on breast and side.

*Range*.— At home in the Arctic regions; in winter is sometimes found as far south as Georgia.

*Note*.— The Snowflake may be known by the fact that it is the only one of our sparrowlike birds that has white prevailing on its wings and tail as well as on its body.

*Characteristics*.— It is never found perched in a tree, but sometimes on a house or fence. Always progresses by walking, never hopping. Sometimes found foraging about barnyards.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### VESPER SPARROW

*Length.*— Six inches.

Upper parts brown, with darker streaks. No yellow anywhere; two white tail feathers; bright bay on the wings.

Under parts dull white, brown stripes on breast and sides.

*Range.*— North America; nests from southern Illinois and Virginia northward into Canada.

*Note.*— The bay on wings and two white tail feathers, showing plainly in flight, distinguishes this bird from all the other sparrows.

*Characteristics.*— A fine singer, with song something like the song-sparrow, but sweeter and more plaintive. Often found in dry upland fields and along dusty roadsides.

### THE WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

*Length.*— Six and a half inches.

Back striped with bay, black, and gray; wings with two white bars edged with yellow; crown black with two white stripes; a yellow line before the eye.

Under parts gray, pure white throat, edged with little black streaks.

*Range.*— Eastern North America; winters from Massachusetts to Florida.

### THE CHIPPING SPARROW

*Length.*— About five inches.

Forehead and bill black, a short grayish line in its middle; top of the head dark chestnut; a light stripe over the eye, and a dark stripe behind the eye; back streaked with black, brown, and buff; rump slate-gray; wings and tail dusky.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

Under parts plain light-gray, darker on the breast, and almost white on the throat and belly.

*Range*.—Eastern North America. Winters in the Gulf States and Mexico.

*Characteristics*.—Song a monotonous *chippy, chippy, chippy*, “rather high and wiry,” sometimes running into an insectlike trill. The humblest of the sparrows. Very sociable, sometimes called the Sociable Bird.

### THE SLATE-COLORED JUNCO

*Length*.—About six inches.

Dark slate color; throat and breast slate-gray; belly and side tail feathers white; pinkish-white beak.

*Range*.—North America; winters southward to the Gulf States.

Sometimes called Snowbird. Usually seen in the United States in winter, picking up in the door-yard what he can find. Travel in flocks. Has a curious habit of feeding mostly in the shady places.

### THE SONG-SPARROW

*Length*.—About six inches.

Head and back streaked with brown and gray; a brown stripe on each side of the throat.

Under parts whitish, striped with dark brown, which tend to form one large blotch on the breast.

*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters from southern Illinois and Massachusetts to the Gulf States.

*Characteristics*.—Its song may be heard in any season of the year, day or night. When alarmed never flies upward, but downward or forward and into some low thicket, pumping its tail as it flies.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### THE TOWHEE

(Joree, Chewink, Ground Robin)

*Length*.—About eight and a half inches.

*Male*.—Upper parts black, sometimes margins with chestnut; throat and chest black, belly white; tan colored under the tail, the side feathers of which are white-tipped.

*Female*.—Reddish-brown where the male is black.

*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters from Virginia to Florida.

*Characteristics*.—Found in thickets and bushy under-growths. Notes of *cheewink*, *towhee*. Song has been vocalized as *chuck-burr*, *pill-a-will-a-will-a*.

### THE CARDINAL

*Length*.—Eight and a quarter inches.

*Male*.—Splendid cardinal red; throat black; black band about the coral-red bill; a fine long crest.

*Female*.—Yellowish-brown, some red in the crest, wings, and tail; face not so black as the male's.

*Range*.—Eastern United States to the plains, and from Florida to the Great Lakes.

### ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

*Length*.—About eight inches.

*Male*.—Black on the head, back, wings, and tail; the belly, rump, several spots on the wings, and three outer tail-feathers, white; breast and wing-linings rose-colored; bill white and very heavy.

*Female*.—Upper parts grayish-brown, margined with cream-buff and pale grayish-brown; no rosy color; orange-yellow under wings; white line over eye; buffy line through center of crown.

*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters in Central and South America.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

### THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE

(Firebird, Golden Robin, Hang-nest, Hammock-maker)

*Length.*— Seven and a half inches.

*Male.*— Orange flame-color with head, neck, and upper half of back black; wings black, edged with white; tail marked with black and orange.

*Female.*— Not so bright as male, duller orange, and black mixed with gray, olive, and brown.

*Range.*— Eastern North America; winters in Central America.

*Characteristics.*— A brilliant bird. The nest is a wonderful construction of woven fibers. The young are great cry-babies.

### THE INDIGO BIRD

(Blue Canary)

*Length.*— Five and a half inches.

*Male.*— Bright blue, greener blue than bluebird; wings and tail dusky.

*Female.*— Plain grayish-brown without streaks; under parts whitish, some streaks, one black streak under the beak.

*Range.*— Eastern United States; winters in Central America. Female a sparrow-looking bird, but with a glint of blue; nervously twitches her tail from side to side; very distrustful of prying strangers. Male sings even in August.

### THE ORCHARD ORIOLE

*Length.*— Seven inches.

*Male.*— Black; rump, breast, belly, and part of wings chestnut; wings and tail edged or tipped with whitish.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

*Female.*—Upper parts grayish-green, brighter on head and rump; tail bright olive-green; under parts dull yellow.

*Young Bird.*—Much like his mother the first year; has a black throat the second year, and some patches of chestnut on the under parts; later like his father.

*Range.*—Eastern North America; winters in Central America.

*Characteristics.*—Builds a beautiful hanging nest in orchard and lawn trees.

### THE COWBIRD

*Length.*—About seven and a half inches.

*Male.*—Very glossy black, with metallic reflections, except head and neck, which are coffee-brown.

*Female.*—Dusky brown, lighter on lower parts.

*Range.*—The whole United States; winters from southern Illinois southward.

*Characteristics.*—Sometimes the males are mistaken for blackbirds. Often found with cattle, even perching on their backs.

### THE RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

*Length.*—Nine and a half inches.

*Male.*—Glossy black with scarlet shoulders, edged with buff.

*Female.*—Mixed rusty black and buff; shoulder not so conspicuous or brightly colored.

*Range.*—North America in general.

### THE PURPLE GRACKLE

(Crow Blackbird, Rusty Hinge)

*Length.*—Twelve to thirteen and a half inches.

*Male.*—Glossy black, with metallic purple, blue, and green reflections.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

*Female*.— Smaller — not twelve inches — and much duller in color.

*Range*.— East of the Alleghanies from Georgia to Massachusetts.

### BRONZED GRACKLE

Very similar to above, but distinguished from it by having its range in the Central States, by less musical or metallic notes, and especially by having no iridescent bars on the feathers of the back.

### THE MEADOW-LARK

*Length*.— Ten and eleven inches.

Upper parts brown, gray, bay, and black; head striped, and yellow spot in front of the eye.

Under parts nearly all yellow, black crescent on breast, dark stripes farther back.

A very useful, beautiful bird and a fine songster.

### THE BLUE JAY

*Length*.— Nearly twelve inches.

Large fine blue and black crest.

Upper parts blue, with black bars and some white tips on wings and tail.

Upper parts grayish-white, with a black collar.

*Range*.— North America.

### THE AMERICAN CROW

*Length*.— From eighteen to twenty inches.

Glossy black all over, with steel-blue or deep purplish reflections.

*Range*.— North America; winters in United States.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

### THE KINGBIRD

*Length.*—Eight inches.

Upper parts slate-colored; head, wings, and tail black; white tip on tail; a flaming orange spot on crown.

Under parts pure white, breast slightly grayish.

*Range.*—North America; winters in Central and South America.

### THE PHŒBE

*Length.*—Seven inches.

Upper parts deep olive-brown, darkest on head; bill and feet black.

Under parts dull white, with yellowish or grayish tinge.

*Range.*—Eastern North America; winters in the Southern States to Cuba and Mexico.

### THE WOOD PEWEE

*Length.*—Six and a half inches.

Upper parts dark brown, with sometimes a tinge of dark olive-green; two more or less light bars on wings; top of the head no darker than back, by which it may be distinguished from the phœbe, and also by the under side of beak not black.

Upper parts yellowish-white with a tinge of dark gray along the side and across the breast.

*Range.*—Eastern North America; winters in Central America.

### RUBY-THROATED HUMMING-BIRD

*Length.*—A little less than four inches.

*Male.*—Bright, shining green above; tail and wings dark purplish; throat beautiful metallic ruby-red,

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

bordered on breast with whitish; other under parts grayish, washed with greenish on the sides.

*Female*.—Without ruby throat, and tail not forked as in male, but some of its feathers tipped with white.  
*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters from Florida to Central America.

### CHIMNEY SWIFT

(Chimney "Swallow")

*Length*.—Five and a half inches.

Sooty brown; tail feathers sharply pointed.

*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters in Central America.

*Characteristics*.—Nests in chimneys. It is not a swallow, though sometimes so called. A bird of wonderful wing power.

### THE DOWNTY WOODPECKER

*Length*.—Barely seven inches—the smallest North American woodpecker.

Upper parts black, a long white patch on middle of the back; wings spotted with black and white; tail with outer black and white bars. Male only has red band on back of head.

Under parts white

*Range*.—Eastern North America. Does not go South in winter.

*Characteristics*.—Cuts into the body of trees for injurious insects; very useful, and should be protected.

### THE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

*Length*.—About nine inches.

Head and neck all crimson-red; glossy blue-black on back and most of wings; rest snow-white with

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

red tinge on belly. Young ones gray where old birds are red, and other colors are not so pure.

*Range*.—Eastern North America.

### FLICKER

(High-hole, Clape, Yellow-Hammer, Golden-Winged Woodpecker)

*Length*.—Twelves inches.

Upper parts brown, barred with black; rump snow-white; head gray, with scarlet band on the back of it.

Under parts with round black spots; large black crescent on breast; throat lilac; male only has black stripe on either side of throat, from base of bill, something like a mustache.

Under sides of wings and tail golden-yellow, showing beautifully in flight.

*Range*.—North America, west to Rocky Mountains and Alaska; winters from Illinois and Massachusetts southward.

### YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER.

*Length*.—Eight and a half inches.

Crown deep scarlet in the male; back barred irregularly with black and yellowish white; wings and tail black, with much white.

Under parts light yellow on the belly, scarlet on the throat, black on the breast, black marks on sides.

*Range*.—Eastern North America; winters from Virginia to Central America.

### MOURNING DOVE

Upper parts olive grayish-brown; forehead buff-pink; crown bluish slate-colored; sides of neck with metallic reflections, *a small black mark below the ear*; tail like back, ashy gray, bounded with black, and tipped with ashy and white.

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

Breast like forehead ; belly cream-buff. The female has breast and forehead washed with grayish-brown, no metallic reflections on neck.

*Range*.— North America ; winters from Southern Illinois and New York to the Greater Antilles and Panama.

*Caution*.— This bird is sometimes mistaken for the wild pigeon. Doves are smaller, and their flight is accompanied by a whistling of the wings, while the flight of pigeons is said to be noiseless. It may also be distinguished from the pigeon by the dove's black mark below the ear.

### YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

*Length*.— About twelve inches.

Upper parts olive-gray ; wings tinged with bright cinnamon ; most of tail feathers black, with large white spots at the ends.

Under parts pure white. Under half of bill yellow.

*Range*.— North America ; winters in Central and South America.

The black-billed cuckoo is to be distinguished from the above by the bill being all black, by its having no cinnamon on wings, and no black on tail.

### BELTED KINGFISHER

*Length*.— About thirteen inches.

Long bristling crest ; bill longer than the head, stout, straight, and sharp.

Leaden-blue above, with many white markings on tail and wings.

Under parts white, with blue belt across breast ; female has also a brown belt.

*Range*.— North America.

*Characteristics*.— Not of any particular use, and certainly of no injury. He simply minds his own business, and so sets us a worthy example.

## THE STUDY OF BIRDS

MANY desire to study the birds, but do not know how to set about it. To such, a few suggestions will be acceptable. It is neither interesting nor profitable to wander about aimlessly, gazing idly at the birds. Therefore, the first thing necessary is to know what to look for.

If you see a bird with which you are not acquainted, take note of everything he does and of all his points of interest.

I. *Size*: Notice whether he is about the same size as the robin or the English sparrow, or larger or smaller. Then in your note-book write, "Size, robin," meaning he is as large as a robin. If smaller, write, "Size, robin —;" or if larger, write, "Size, robin +."

II. *Plumage*: Its color, and whether bright or dull.

III. *Markings*: Notice the color of the top of the head, of the back, the breast, wings, and tail. The markings will be one of your most certain means of identifying birds.

IV. *Shape*: Note if the body is short and stocky, or long and slender. Note the bill, if short and stout for cracking seeds; long and slender for holding worms; long and heavy for drilling holes; slender and delicate for probing flowers; hooked for tearing prey, etc. Note the shape of the wings — whether short and round, for short flights; long and slender, for long flights. Note if tail is square, notched, fan-shaped, graduated, pointed, long and forked, or short and tipped with spines. Then the foot: If weak and used only for perching and clinging; or if strong, and used for walking, climbing, or for holding and tearing prey.

V. *Movements*: Any peculiarities about the bird should be noted, as they are usually characteristic. Does the bird hop, walk, creep up tree-trunks, twitch the tail from side to side, scratch with both feet, etc.?

## INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIRDS

VI. *Flight*: If fast, note the fact, and whether direct, abrupt, and zigzag, or smooth and circling. If slow, take note of it, and whether flapping, sailing and soaring, flapping and sailing alternately, or obliquely, or undulating.

You can also make notes of where the bird is observed. It may be in the orchard or the garden, by the roadside, in the woods, in the meadow, or by the water. These places tell much about the life habits of your bird.

Of course, you should notice what sort of food the bird eats, so far as you can, and note this also. And you will find many interesting things in observing how the bird gets its food.

Surely you will not neglect to note his song and all his notes, as in calling when alarmed, when irritated, etc. Note the manner and time of singing. Is it from a perch, in the air, in the night, and when does it join the daybreak chorus? Is the song plaintive, or happy; is it long or short?

Where you can, note the location of the nest, whether near the ground, on tree-trunks, on branches, in a crotch, on a horizontal limb, or pendent from a branch. Then the size and form of the nest,—cup, pocket, basket, dome, or retort-shaped. What kind of material enters into the construction of the nest, and for how long a time is it used? Is it abandoned after the first brood, or is it used for a number of years? If you have an opportunity, you should watch the building of the nest, and learn the methods of its construction, the number of days required, and the habits of the male at this time.

Note the number of eggs, their color and their markings. You should learn all you can of the work of incubation. When the birds are hatched, are they feathered or naked; their conditions during growth, and their conditions when they leave the nest; how they are cared for by their parents.

## MY GARDEN NEIGHBORS

Every school teacher ought to enlist her pupils in making a census of the grounds near by. Make a map or chart of the grounds selected. Place this map, drawn to a large scale, on the board. Begin in the fall to find all the bird nests, note their location, and mark them on the map or chart. Mark not only the location of the nest, but where built, and of what bird. By keeping such record for a few years, you will know whether the birds are increasing or decreasing in that particular section; what ones should be attracted and encouraged; what ones, if any, should be discouraged or driven away. Many other things will be suggested by the study, and you will have an outdoor study for yourself and your pupils that will aid body as well as mind.

In the note-books used for individual study, near the front of the book, have written the following suggestions for study:—

1. Locality — tree: bush: ground.
2. Size — compare with robin or English sparrow.
3. Form — long: short: stocky: slender.
4. Bill — stout: hooked: long: short: slender.
5. Tail — length: shape at end.
6. Legs — long: weak: strong: short: scales.
7. Toes — webbed: how turned: length of hind claws.
8. Color — bright: dull.
9. Markings — on head: breast: wings: tail: back.
10. Manners — walk: hop: quiet: active: noisy: silent.
11. Habits — of eating.
12. Song — long: short: continuous: broken.
13. Flight — direct: undulating: fluttering: labored.
14. Nest — place: shape: materials: eggs.
15. Young — plumage: behavior: how cared for.

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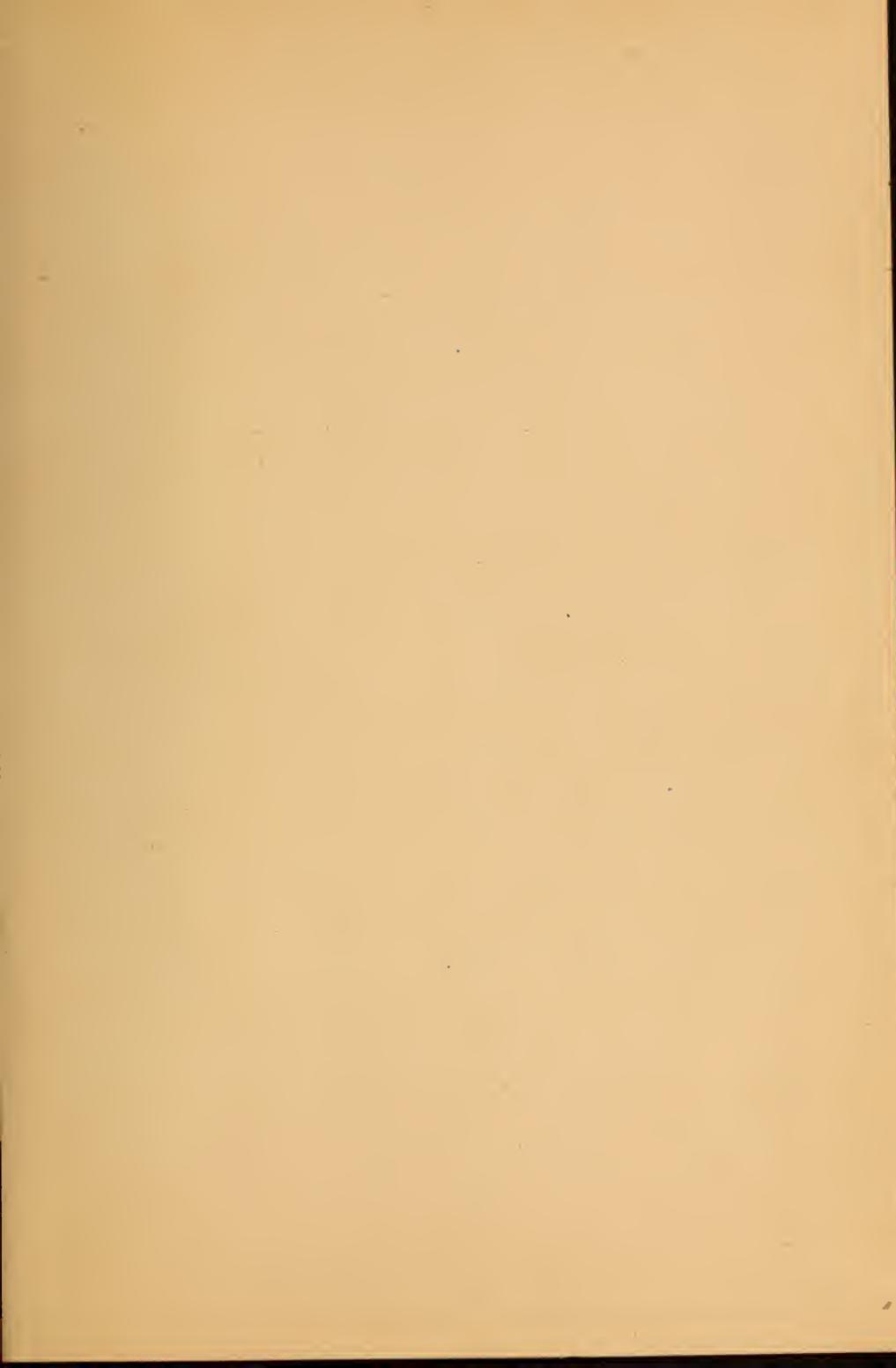
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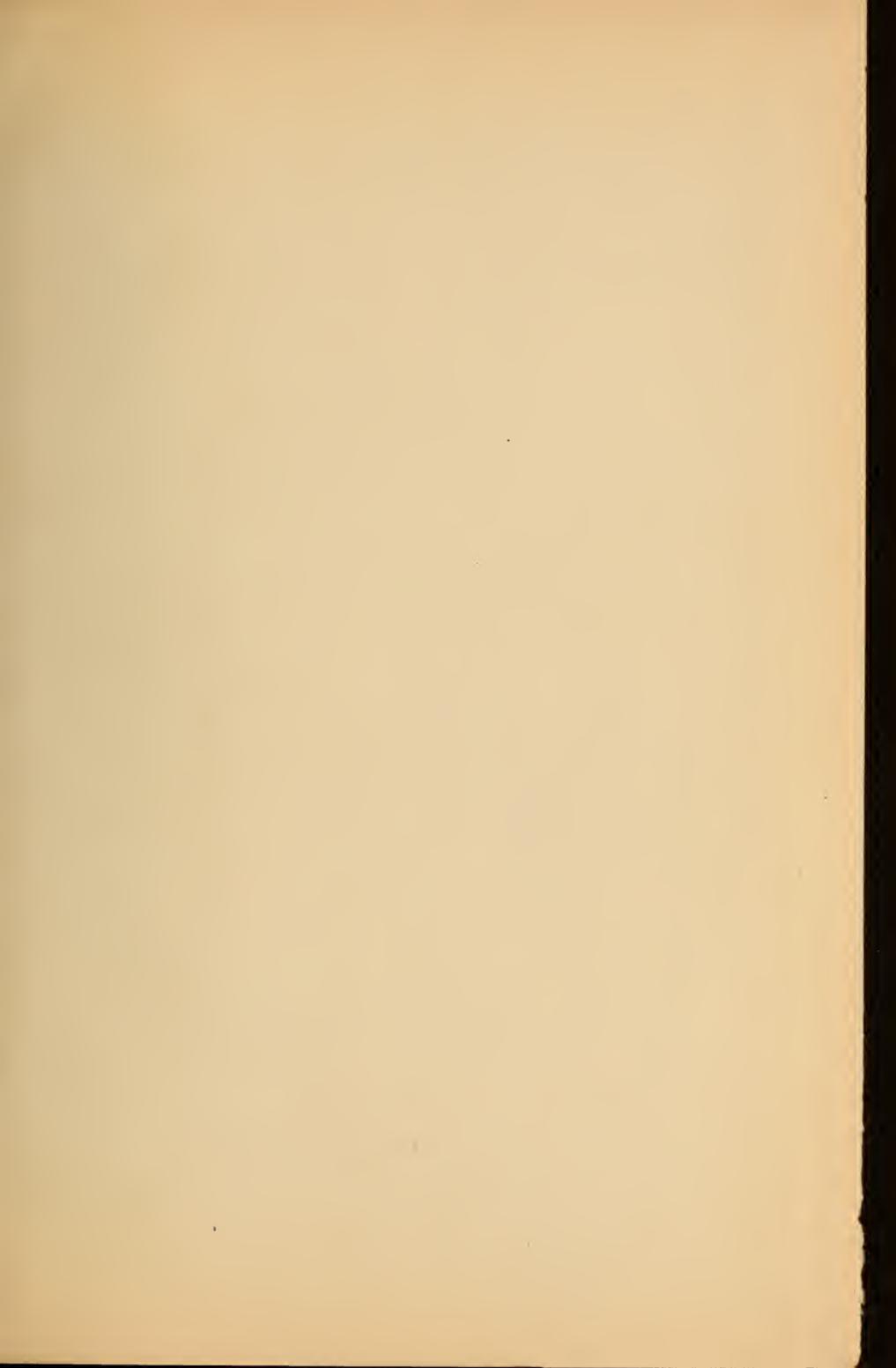
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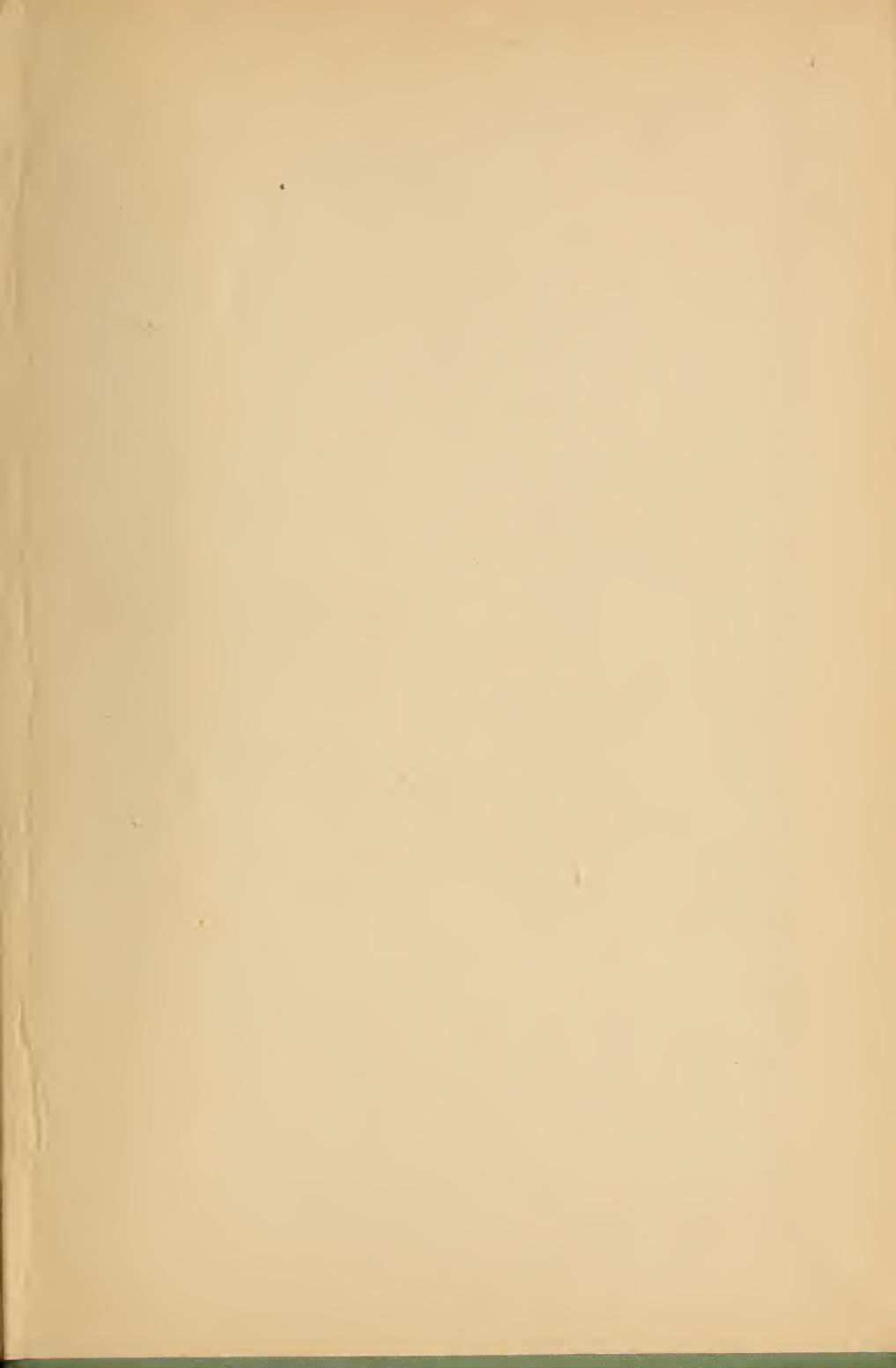
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